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COMMONWEAL

A Review of Religion, Politics, and Culture

September 14, 2001

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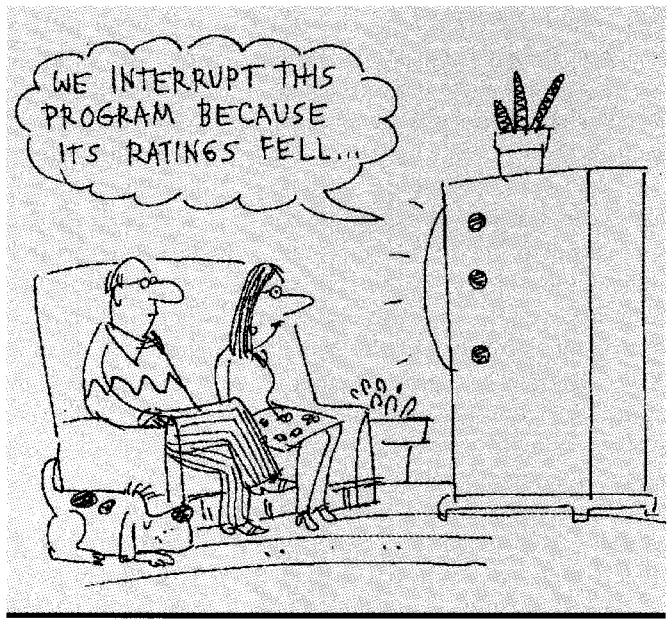

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To the Editors

A rage for order

Paul Baumann's "Anthropology with a Difference" (August 17) was very thought-provoking. There is no doubt in my mind that a more conservative or traditional social order makes it easier to pass on values. However, Mary Douglas's time in a convent school is not normative for people in our society. While we may admire and appreciate other forms of social order, we cannot duplicate them. What the church must deal with is a society where stability and coherence have been sacrificed for maximum personal freedom. This implies chaos and discontinuity. Neither bishops nor theologians have created this situation, but all of us in the church have to deal with it.

Douglas may be right in rejecting "methodological individualism," but the society we live in is thoroughly individualistic. Although Douglas may be "pessimistic about the fate of a hierarchial and sacramental religion in an increasingly individualistic and socially fragmented world," we should not forget that Christianity did not come into the world as a neat, organic package, but began as a remnant torn from the cloak of a highly organized, rational social order. Maybe we're back at the beginning.

(REV.) PAUL A. HOTTINGER
Downers Grove, Ill.

Heart of the matter

Bravo for your editorial stand (August 17) on the stem-cell issue! Proverbs 14 states that "sometimes a way seems right to a man but the end leads to death." The wisdom in these words should be applied to the dilemma presented us by stem-cell research.

The use of adult stem cells is both ethically and morally permissible. What is debated today, however, is the fate of a hundred thousand human embryos that will be discarded if no further use is made of them. To preserve the sanctity of life, John Paul II and our bishops have urged us to oppose the use of these embryos because extracting their stem cells will destroy them.

Thus, if we support embryonic stem-cell research and do not recognize the heart of this matter, namely, that to use embryonic stem cells is to destroy human life, we too will foster and support another plank in the culture of death.

HARRY D. CARROZZA, M.D.
Tucson, Ariz.

Stem-cell rights

Your otherwise excellent editorial, "The Stem-Cell Sell" (August 17) is flawed by your assertion that "these embryos are not human persons." On what grounds does that assertion rest? Is it that they are not sentient, or don't have a developed nervous system, or are not self-aware, or are not capable of making autonomous decisions, or are not sufficiently individuated at conception? Each of these points has been argued by bioethicists for denying personhood to embryos (and fetuses), while still others have offered counterarguments to refute them. Although the metaphysical claims on either side continue to be disputed, it is precisely the point you make about dealing with human life that requires at least the presumption that embryos are persons. Only persons have rights—including the right to life. If embryos are not persons, it follows that directly taking their lives doesn't amount to murder, and utilitarian arguments which appeal to the greater good for using them in stem-cell research tend to become persuasive. Unless we can convince the general public and legislators to think of embryos as persons, it is unlikely that we can ever achieve an absolute ban against this kind of research.

GERALD WILLIAMS
Basking Ridge, N.J.

Benedictions

Bless the Benedictines. Bless you for your short Et Cetera, "Before There Was a Vatican" (August 17). Add an alleluia to your "Amen." JIM LEIN
Minot, N.Dak.

Amen! Alleluia!

The August 17 Et Cetera gladdened my heart—your objective reporting on:

1. the agreement between Sister Joan Chittister and her superior, Sister Christine Vladimiroff, O.S.B., with regard to Vatican silencing edicts, as well as your lack of condemnation compared to the pharisaical stone-throwing that is present in other publictaions, such as a recent *Our Sunday Visitor*;

2. Archbishop Rembert Weakland's dealing with engineered outside interference with his cathedral project, a meddling that makes me think these Benedictines are leading our church in splendid and special ways, and that moves me to ask if some investigative reporting on the likes of the forces be-

(Continued on page 34)

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No voodoo economics—yet

The incredible shrinking surplus is upon us, moving in briskly and proving larger than expected. Even more incredible—though shrinking fast—it is still the second largest surplus in U.S. history, thanks to the end of the cold war and to the fiscal responsibility of the Clinton administration and the last several Congresses. Why is the surplus shrinking?

As many economists predicted, the Bush tax cut, accounting for two-thirds of the decline, has taken a large chunk of federal funds. Declining tax revenues caused by the slowing economy accounts for the other third. But if the surplus is so big, why worry? Because, first, most of the surplus belongs to Social Security and Medicare and, in theory and recent practice, has been kept in the famous "lock-box" by both Democrats and Republicans; and second, President George W. Bush and Congress have spending plans that, if passed, would bring on deficit spending.

The meaning of these volatile trillions and their relation to the budget process and the future of Social Security and Medicare is difficult to grasp. Such large amounts of money (some of it mere projection) and the complexity of the federal budget lead many people to look at the consequences of a revenue shortfall (what will happen?). But some attention needs to be paid to how this happened.

For many Americans those consequences focus on Social Security and Medicare. Will there be enough for baby-boom retirees if the current surpluses in these funds are used to make up the difference between government revenues (now declining) and government expenditures (likely to increase)? Current Medicare recipients want to know if there will be any real money for the prescription-drug benefit in bills now pending before Congress.

Meanwhile, parents of school-aged children want more money for smaller classes, better teacher preparation, and the technology and information that will give their children a real chance at the jobs of the future. And then there are what appear to be somewhat more esoteric concerns. For example, what is to become of stores of weapons-grade plutonium from U.S. and Russian nuclear weapons that were scheduled to be "immobilized" or recycled as nuclear reactor fuel? The Bush administration says the United States cannot now afford the promised cleanup; certainly the Russians cannot. Closer to home, the Welfare Reform Act must be revisited and perhaps revised next year, in the midst of what may be a very, very sluggish economy with its predictably higher welfare rolls. The list goes on.

In light of the shrinking surplus, what are Bush's concerns? His priorities, he says, are spending on the military and on education. He has asked Congress to make those its priorities too. In fact, the president seemed to take inordinate pleasure in the "straitjacket" that the shrinkage will bring to federal spending—"incredibly positive news," he said. It will curb the propensity he sees in the House and the Senate to waste the taxpayers' money—not something he plans to do himself, of course. While crowing about coming tax cuts, especially to the most well-off Americans, he is pressing for money to increase the military budget and to begin building the missile shield for which he and Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld are aggressively lobbying. Who would be surprised if education spend-

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ing (to which the federal government contributes less than 10 percent, in any case) were to be sacrificed to securing the military funds the administration insists it needs to protect the United States from terrorists and rogue nations?

The administration's real priority is a missile shield, whose component parts show few signs of working and whose construction threatens the stability of U.S.-Russian nuclear-arms-control measures embodied in the ABM Treaty. The nomination of Air Force General Richard Myers, with his experience running the U.S. Space Command Center, to head the Joint Chiefs only confirms this fixation. Hard to believe, but the administration manages to look both *penny foolish* and *pound foolish* in stepping back from the plutonium cleanup—nuclear material that could be stolen or bought by terrorists and rogue nations to build bombs—while pouring money into an unproven antimissile system intended to thwart such potential bombs (which, as one pundit remarked, are more likely to be delivered by ship than by air). Vladimir Luken, deputy speaker of the Russian parliament, is right in observing that the missile shield is "the most excessive response to the least probable threat."

As Washington returns to work, Congress will need to steel itself against the administration's single-mindedness on military spending. It will have to show greater shrewdness and determination than it did last spring in agreeing to the breadth and depth of the Bush tax cuts. Indeed, a good deal more skepticism is in order not only about the administration's budget numbers (economist Paul Krugman contends they're lies) but about whether Lawrence B. Lindsey, the president's chief economic adviser, actually knows what he's talking about. The economy may benefit from the tax rebates currently arriving in millions of U.S. households as the administration argues, but Congress needs to revisit the cuts in the tax rates, the capital gains tax, and the estate tax if we are to avoid repeating the deficit disaster of the Reagan era.

Remember the phrase, "voodoo economics"? George H.W. Bush, the president's father, and contender against Ronald Reagan for the 1980 Republican nomination, introduced it in the primary campaign. That prescient slogan captured the magical thinking that underlay Reagan's supply-side economics and its dedication to drastic tax cuts as a means to end "big government" and to get money into the hands of the investing class. Those cuts combined with large increases in military spending led to enormous deficits that not only threatened government liquidity, but took a serious toll on the economy as well. As Reagan's vice president Bush learned to live with voodoo economics and suffered the consequences in a one-term presidency. His son should take note. If the president is unwilling to revise the tax cuts of last spring or refuses to cut back on increases in military spending, Congress should offer him the straitjacket he so gleefully bestowed on them.

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NOTEBOOK

THE MOUTHS OF BABES

Young Catholics speak up

What do Miss Wisconsin 1999, a Vietnamese immigrant, a law student, and a Catholic Worker have in common? They're young (twenty-seven and under), they're Catholic, and, along with 147 others, they submitted essays to *Commonweal*'s Younger Writers Contest (see page 14 ff.). The question that provoked these young authors' interest: "What are the tensions and the opportunities entailed in being a Catholic in America? How does the church help or hinder you in integrating your faith with your culture, politics, imagination?"

In judging the contest, the editorial staff was struck by the variety of experiences and approaches: Miss Wisconsin wrote about her public appearances promoting chastity; the Vietnamese student, about coping with literal and cultural poverty in her adopted country. The lawyer-to-be parsed the difference between the Vatican II generation and his own: the latter no less religious but markedly less institutionally committed and informed. The Catholic Worker struggled to feel at home in his parish. A handful of adjectives kept coming to mind as the essays circulated from cubicle to cubicle in the *Commonweal* offices: thoughtful, energetic, serious.

Anna Nussbaum, a high school senior from Colorado Springs, Colorado, took the prize. Gorgeous prose and a novelistic approach to the question distinguished her essay in a strong field. Her "Axioms of Faith" provides a portrait of one young Catholic, representative and yet distinct. A short selection from the other contestants will be found on pages 17–18. Unfortunately, space precludes publishing more. But herewith we provide a brief collective portrait, culled from an admittedly self-selecting subset of Young Catholics (YCs). Another proviso: We suspect that our contest question, especially use of the c-word (culture), brought out a more conservative crowd than the general run of Catholic young people.

In fact, the majority of writers interpreted "culture" as a negative term. Some, borrowing John Paul II's vocabulary, identified American culture as a "culture of death." Others denounced popular culture as the conduit of decadent sexual mores. Still others lamented the loss of a Catholic subculture rich with devotional practices, religious art, educational institutions, and jokes that would insulate them from the larger culture.

From the church (both its left and right branches), these young Catholics have apparently absorbed the message that their American culture must be opposed. But what have they learned to embrace? A sense of service, as was indicated by the number of former Jesuit Volunteers who wrote. The diversity of the American people? Definitely. American democracy? Yes. American music, movies, dance, poetry, visual arts, and literature? Well, not so clear. In the nearly 150 es-

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says, there were only three peeps about that: welcome accounts of faith nurtured and sharpened by the art of Frank Sinatra, *The Matrix*, and Mark Rothko.

It would be hard to exaggerate the inspiration our essayists derive from the pope. His words and actions come to them filtered through the dominant American evangelical idiom. Young Catholics hear his jeremiads; they appear unfamiliar with other aspects of his long and complicated life, his young manhood in the theater, his early commitment to poetry and philosophy, his continuing encouragement of artistic expression.

American culture did come in for some praise, especially its opportunities for women. Here young people professed embarrassment, alienation, rage, and bemusement about the gulf between their church and their culture. As one entrant put it, "I accept women's equality as a given: I've always attended coed schools, and I've always assumed that my classmates will have the same opportunities and desires that I have....Why would anyone not want women priests? Why would anyone oppose birth control?"

If they are unsure and skeptical about how cultural expression fits with faith, our writers were gung-ho on social service as an essential nurturer and expression of faith. The American Catholic Church, in effective teaching and programs, supports their service to the poor, imprisoned, and sick. These young people want similar, specifically Catholic structures for activism on the environment.

They also want better religious formation. Across the conservative-to-liberal spectrum, young Catholics reported being dissatisfied with their religious education. Young people see in CCD lots of good will, but little substance. Newman centers fared better, but even students committed to such centers felt ill-equipped to answer the prejudices of their fellow students that the sum total of Catholicism consists in sexual backwardness.

On the one hand, young people perceive their religious educators as out of touch with their family life, their cultural context, and the pressures both create. "The church [that] has brought so much joy into my life at times lacks a true comprehension of the reality in which I, and many other American Catholics, live." But the essayists also beg for more of what they don't know. Many wrote because they had stumbled onto important Catholic resources—chant, modern French religious art, a form of Catholic meditation, medieval philosophy—and had been astonished. Why hadn't anyone told them?

These essays raise many challenges for bishops, parishes, Catholic universities, Newman centers, and *Commonweal*. Among them: How to bring a balance to young Catholics' conception of culture? How to recover and transmit a Catholic joy in beauty and the incarnated world? How to engage religiously, and listen to, young people embarrassed and estranged by church teachings on birth control, ordination, homosexuality? How, as winner Anna Nussbaum asks, to provide words for a Catholic dictionary of belief?

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SIDNEY CALLAHAN

PHILOSOPHER ON CALL

What my husband told the president

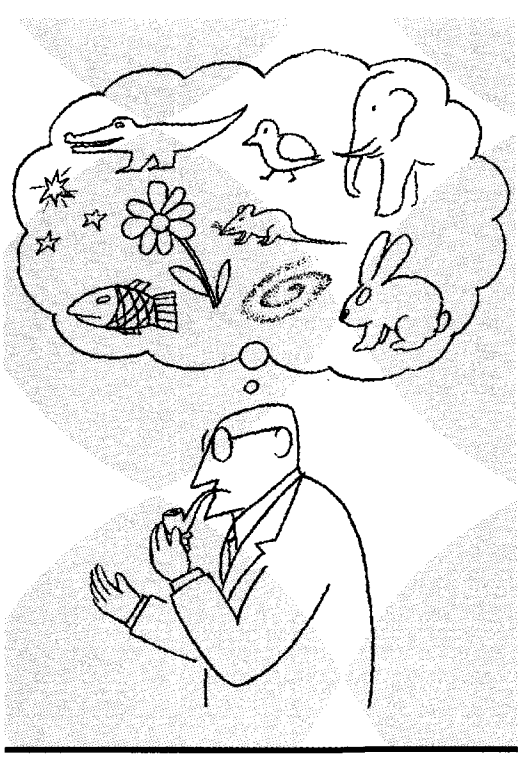
The recent controversy over stem-cell research started with a big bang at our house. My philosopher husband, Daniel Callahan, was suddenly called to the White House to consult with George W. Bush and his aides. Our old friend Leon Kass, now appointed to chair a new bioethical oversight committee, had invited Dan to go with him.

At the meeting, in the Oval Office no less, President Bush was engaging, asked intelligent questions, and appeared genuinely interested in the issues. The discussion lasted for over an hour. It turned out that both Dan and Leon morally disapprove of funding more research that would involve further destruction of embryos. But could some compromise be reached that recognized the value of the scientific research? As all the world now knows, on August 9, Bush presented a compromise solution on national television.

In the meantime, Dan has been subjected to a micromedia blitz of interviews. So what did Bush say, and what did you say, and what is your own opinion? Naturally, we watched Bush's presentation with a good deal of suspense. I thought the president made a clear and fair presentation and demonstrated ethical seriousness. Of course, compromises never end all controversy or please all parties—including me, the pro-life wife of a pro-choice bioethicist.

I remain saddened that the cultural fight must go on, and on, to achieve full protection for embryonic human life. Human life *is* human life, like our own in all but development. Obviously, our permissive abortion laws have paved the way for the present attack on immature and vulnerable life. If a woman can kill the embryo or fetus within her womb for any reason, then why not destroy embryos for "a good cause"—that is, to further the much-hyped scientific research that *may*, *someday*, help cure disease?

I also see that the reproductive technology of in vitro fertilization has been abused. It seems morally acceptable to medically remedy and technologically assist a husband and a wife who could, but for their infertility, have children. But in order to make the technology more efficient and cost-effective, more embryos than can ever be used are produced and frozen. This practice leads to selecting, storing, and discarding embryos. In my opinion, we should never have reached a situation in which thousands of embryos remain in the freezer. A no-less-ominous byproduct of the new reproductive technologies is the existence of sperm banks, TV auctions by egg donors, and widespread sex selection of embryos in favor of males.



It took millions of years of evolution to develop in vivo fertilization and reproduction. This evolutionary process was advantageous because offspring could be better protected. Leaving fertilized eggs in the sand as some species do is, after all, an open invitation to predators. Leaving embryos in the freezer can be seen to be another kind of abandonment. If parents discard or donate embryos to researchers, then too bad. Creating embryos for research or cloning embryos to destroy them is worse.

I see this lack of protection for embryonic life as symptomatic of our culture's lack of care for all children, whether born or unborn. The ancient practice of infanticide, particularly female infanticide, was never thoroughly suppressed in Western culture, despite the opposition of Christians. Who cares to welcome a child for Christ's sake if it doesn't serve adult needs or desires? Children are still too often treated as property, and in many places around the globe they are sold into sexual slavery or condemned to sweatshop labor. In "developed" countries we see the emergence of thousands of child pornography Web sites. While women have won the status of equality (almost, at least in the West, out of reach of the Taliban), throwaway children are discarded from conception through adolescence.

All right; maybe I am unfairly blaming scientists for the culture's utilitarian bent and moral tone deafness. But researchers want to pursue the cutting edge wherever it leads. And scientists too are fallible, quite easily driven by personal ambition, self-serving bias, and the search for grant money.

I feel even more indignant toward those few bioethicists who bless the troops and approve almost anything short of torturing innocent children for fun. Surely, no ethicist can be on the payroll of a profit-making biotech company and retain his or her credibility. Abstract ethical knowledge doesn't

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protect persons from moral corruption or from being co-opted. And may a dire penalty fall on those bioethicists who make up special names for embryos, such as the "preembryo" or "embryoid bodies." One philosopher, in a *Science* article, even proposed a new label for those embryos no longer wanted by parents. By now we should understand how technical terms like "collateral damage" serve to disguise the fact that human lives are at stake.

Where to turn for relief? Hope springs from family life and love of the next generations. On the day that my husband was up early to prepare for the White House, Perry, our five-year-old granddaughter, appeared at our bedside. "I am too excited to sleep," she said, "because today is Pussy Willow's birthday party." Pussy Willow is our nanny's cat which was turning twelve. At the celebration later in the day, all the guests wore mouse ears, ate cheese, and sang the traditional greetings. Thus every new day brings its important adventures. Perry was thrilled by the kitty gala, while grandpa went to the White House to bell the cat. Meow, meow—let's keep life in perspective. □

OF SEVERAL MINDS

JOHN GARVEY

IS NOTHING SACRED?

What's missing in the stem-cell debate

President George W. Bush's address on stem-cell research and the subsequent commentary made me think of our loss of any visceral sense of wonder, awe, and a feeling for what words like "sacred" mean. "When I consider the heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; what is man, that thou art mindful of him?" (Psalm 8). There is awe before the infinite spectacle of the heavens, and awe also before the infinitesimally small; or at least there should be.

I am drawn back to a passage in Pascal's *Pensées* about the fact that humanity has been placed between infinities, the vastness of the cosmos and the infinitely divisible microcosmos. The human being is nothing compared with the vastness of galaxies, and is enormous in comparison with the atomic and subatomic realms. "Let him lose himself in wonders as amazing in their littleness as the others in their vastness. For who will now be astounded at the fact that our body, which a little while ago was imperceptible in the universe, itself imperceptible in the bosom of the whole, is not a colossus, a world, or rather a whole, in respect of the nothingness we cannot reach? He who regards himself in this light will be afraid of himself, and observing himself sustained in the body given him by nature between these two abysses of the Infinite and Nothing, will tremble at the sight of these marvels; and I think that, as his curiosity changes into admiration, he will be more disposed to contemplate them in silence than to examine them with presumption."

There is something here about reverence, a sense of the sacred, which has not been heard enough in this debate. Atheistic and agnostic scientists (the late Carl Sagan was one) will often say that they feel awe and a sense of what religious people call the sacred when they encounter the vastness of the universe and the glory of its wonders. But this sense of stillness and awe—a good and valuable aesthetic experience—does not exhaust what believers mean when they speak of an encounter with the sacred. For the believer such an encounter is also a charge; it obligates us.

There has been an interesting tone-deafness where the discussion of embryonic stem cells is concerned. Too frequently reference is made to "a tiny collection of cells," as if the smallness of the embryo at this stage of its development made it unworthy of serious moral consideration or respect. But even among those who acknowledge the awe they feel before the processes that mark the beginning of life, there is still a disagreement that necessarily overlaps with disagreements over such issues as abortion and capital punishment. And the ways in which we address these issues reveal an unbridgeable gap.

To speak of the sacredness of life means

"Listen...with the ear of your heart...for my word is meant for you." (Rule of Benedict)

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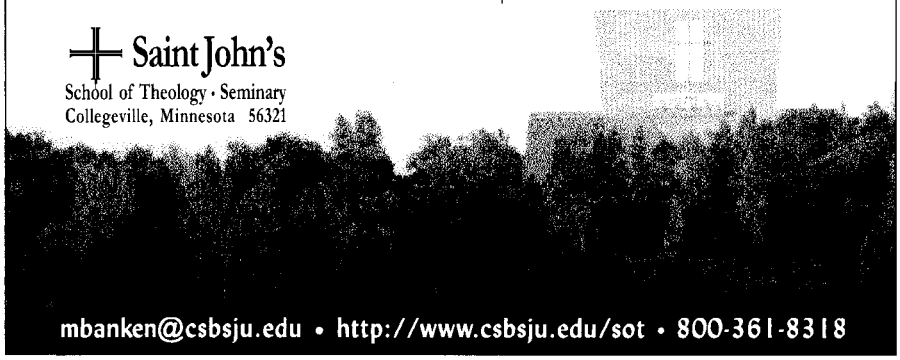

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more than a respect for its complexity or an admiration of its beauty. If meaning is something that has its source solely in humanity, and if the meaning and value of a life depend only on whether we as human beings choose to value and welcome that life, then the proponents of both abortion and experiments with embryos have a point. The universe itself is meaningless; meaning, from this point of view, is a uniquely human symptom, something we do, something we alone confer. But if life has intrinsic value, something that does not depend on my attitude toward it or my acceptance of it, then I must feel the silence Pascal speaks of. My reverence *obligates* me. It does not allow me to regard this life, at whatever stage, merely as a means to an end, no matter how noble the end.

But our discussion of this has been to some extent a casualty of the ways in which the idea of the sacred has been shoehorned into the realm of the totally subjective. Religious people are said to be imposing their views on others, where embryonic stem-cell research or abortion is concerned. We are expected to allow a secular approach—one that denies the weight of the sacred—to trump our concerns; this view, after all, is based on "the facts," where the objection to the manipulation of life at this stage is based on "theology."

We should not let ourselves get sidetracked into a discussion of whether one can speak of an embryo as a person. It is certainly the beginning of a human life; it will not, if it finds a womb, grow into a cabbage or a boot. It is what we believe about life at its origin that matters here; and the belief in the sacred should have at least as much weight, even weight in law, as the belief that there is no such thing. Pascal again: "We naturally believe ourselves far more capable of reaching the center of things than of embracing their circumference. The visible extent of the world visibly exceeds us; but as we exceed little things, we think ourselves more capable of knowing them." The problem is less with science and research than with the reverence, or irreverence, with which we approach them. Of course good people can disagree about such things; but the attitude currently most in fashion dictates that one set of good people should always defer to the other, as if there were no reasonable grounds for debate. And on their definition of reason—one that excludes any sense that the sacred is more than an aesthetic consideration—I am afraid there are none. □

OF SEVERAL MINDS

WILLIAM PFAFF

ALBANIANS IN MACEDONIA

Quit while you're ahead

Peace in Macedonia and balance in the rest of the Balkans depend on whether the ethnic Albanian forces in Macedonia, having won, will know when to stop. Otherwise, another war may follow. To stop when you are ahead, however, is an act of wisdom rarely displayed, especially in situations where ethnic feeling and anger are as intense as in Macedonia.

The Albanians' victory was originally launched from the diaspora, from Switzerland, Germany, and the United States. It is compromised by a long-standing complicity with Albanian mafias implicated in all the sordid trades of the war-wracked Balkans: the traffic in girls, drugs, cigarettes, stolen cars, arms, refugees, and illegal immigrants.

The Albanians nonetheless successfully maneuvered the Serbs out of their domination of Kosovo. The Albanians of Kosovo had been stripped of their political rights and civil status by Slobodan Milosevic in 1989; but under the leadership of Ibrahim Rugova, they began to practice an exemplary policy of disciplined civil disobedience and nonviolence, a policy without precedent in twentieth-century Europe.

It got them nowhere against the repressive regime of the Serbs. As a result, in April 1996 the armed resistance force, which had prepared itself outside Kosovo, struck the Serbs in locations across the province. That was five months after the Dayton agreement had ratified Croatian and Bosnian Moslem independence from Yugoslavia. The Albanians, whose situation in Kosovo was ignored at Dayton, concluded, not unreasonably, that violence would pay. They set out to make the NATO powers and the European Union rescue them, too, from Serb domination.

They have largely succeeded. Intensified Serbian repression was the response to Albanian violence in Kosovo. Within two years, the situation was so bad that NATO reluctantly concluded that it had to act.

Kosovo's Albanian militants, organized as the Kosovo Liberation Army, demanded Kosovo's independence. The EU and NATO nations would not agree. Under Western pressure, and with American assurances of support, the KLA moderated its demand and said it would accept autonomy for Kosovo—with, however, an intrusive NATO presence there and in Serbia. The Serbs would not agree. During the war that followed, NATO effectively allied itself with KLA forces on the ground inside Kosovo. After Serbia's surrender, in order to increase pressure to oust Slobodan Milosevic's government, the United States gave new support to the KLA and to its allies inside southern Serbia, as they launched a separatist campaign.

After the Milosevic government was unseated, these Albanian fighters moved on to Macedonia, where the territories bordering Kosovo are also mainly populated by ethnic Albanians. It was the U.S. Army's refusal to properly police this zone and its frontier that allowed the Albanian militants to mount their new drive into Macedonia. This contributed to the impression, now widespread in Macedonia, that the United States secretly backs the Albanians against the Macedonian Slavs. The Amer-

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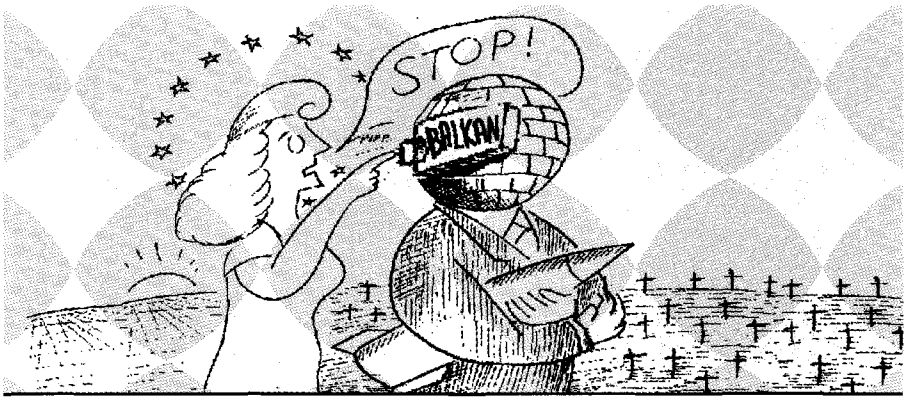
ican army is actually afraid to expose its soldiers to danger.

The proclaimed aim of the guerrillas is to win for Macedonian Albanians the status they have until now been denied: the right to school and university instruction in their language, official status for the Albanian language, an equitable presence of Albanians in police and government, and power devolution. The Macedonian government fears permanent division of the country and eventual Albanian secession to a future single Albanian homeland. The vision of Macedonian moderates, and of the European states supplying the troops now in the country, is the traditional liberal one of a nonethnic state with equal rights for all citizens, and with ethnic origin a matter of cultural but not political identity.

Ali Ahmeti, the head of the Albanian Liberation Army in Macedonia, says he accepts the liberal state. "We shouldn't leave a united Europe only as a slogan," he says. "We should achieve it here, like it is in the rest of Europe." He has agreed to the current settlement, under which



the guerrillas are to give up arms. Whether he controls his troops remains to be seen.

The Macedonian Albanians now have the essentials of what they have wanted. They are an acknowledged political force in Macedonia, have established this position through armed action, and have seen it ratified by NATO and the European Community. They have forced NATO to take a role in Macedonia, one that it is unlikely to be able to abandon, and which is a guarantee of the Albanians' own position. Three obstacles remain. One is actual surrender to NATO of enough guerrilla weapons to assure the Macedonian majority of the Albanians' good faith. Second is ratification of the peace agreement by Macedonia's parliament. Third is return of the people from both sides who have been displaced from their homes. The last can happen only if the first two obstacles are overcome. If it does happen, the new status of the Albanian minority is assured.

The Albanian militants should know that it is time now to stop. As matters stand, they have won what they had a right to win. □

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Barry Hillenbrand

NO EASY CHOICES

Japan confronts defeat—again

September 8 was the date set for a gathering of the American-Japanese establishment—scholars, diplomats, intellectuals, artists, corporate executives, politicians, even a smattering of journalists and entertainers—to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the San Francisco Peace Treaty, which formally ended the war in the Pacific. Signed in 1951 with great solemnity—and an even greater sense of optimism—the treaty resolved various territorial and economic issues, pledged Japan to make good on war reparations, set in motion the end of American occupation, and cautiously welcomed Japan back into the community of independent nations by restoring full sovereignty.

Judged by the congratulatory tone of the festivities scheduled for San Francisco fifty years later, the treaty seems to have succeeded in rehabilitating Japan. Dance festivals, art exhibitions, concerts, and a host of heavy-duty seminars, all generously funded by blue-chip corporations and foundations, celebrate a peace-loving Japan and emphasize the mostly happy state of U.S.-Japanese relations. No one, it seems, is remembering Pearl Harbor. Issues like Japan's predatory war in China, its suppression of Korea, and the grisly war crimes committed by the imperial army while conquering Southeast Asia did not figure prominently on the agenda.

Has Japan finally moved out of the shadow and curse of World War II? Has all been forgiven and forgotten? Well, not quite. Only three weeks before the anniversary celebration, a visit by Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi to Tokyo's Yasukuni shrine, a memorial to Japan's war dead, set off a wave of anti-Japanese sentiment, especially in Asia. The controversy clearly demonstrates that Japan's wartime record continues to excite passions abroad, as well as ambiguity and confusion in Japan itself. The Chinese and Koreans, who suffered years of torment at Japan's hand, are easily unnerved by anything that might signal a return to militarism. A visit by a senior government official to the green and majestic confines of Yasukuni has become one of those signals.

But should it be? Yasukuni was established in 1869 to honor those who died in all of Japan's wars. The shrine has become the resting place, according to Shinto belief, for the souls of the 2.5 million dead—2.3 million from World War II—whose names are recorded on sheets of paper secured

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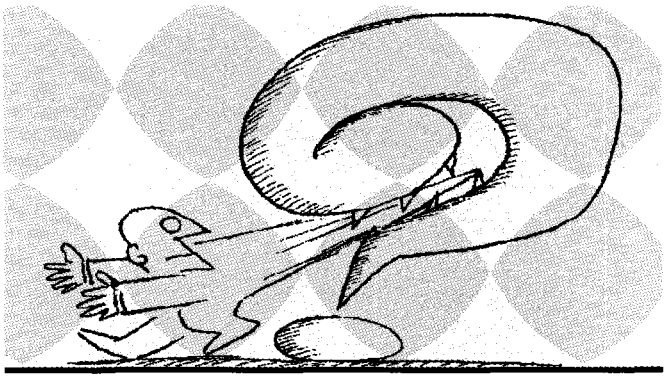

in more than two thousand folders. No bones, ashes, or bodies are actually interred at Yasukuni. Over the years, names have been added to the register, including in 1978, the names of fourteen officers who were found guilty by the Tokyo war crimes tribunal and were either hanged by the American occupation forces or died in prison.

When the news of this addition, secretly inscribed by Shinto priests, leaked out the following year, Yasukuni became a focal point of conflict about Japan's war legacy. Radical nationalists and militarists—extremely noisy but relatively small groups—appropriated Yasukuni. Leftists, peace groups, and most foreign governments scorned veneration at the shrine as a threat to Japan's peace constitution. In 1985 when former Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone made an official visit to the shrine on August 15, the anniversary of the end of the war, protests exploded and relations with China and Korea suffered. He did not return. Since then only two other prime ministers have visited the shrine, but not on the August anniversary and only in what each called a private visit, which meant he paid for the flowers out of his own pocket.

During his election campaign earlier this year, Koizumi pledged to visit Yasukuni on August 15. Fears were raised that Koizumi, perhaps the most charismatic and dynamic leader the country has had in the postwar era, was a closet nationalist intent on destroying Japan's constitution, which foregoes war as a sovereign right. Everyone, especially his foreign minister, opposed the visit, but Koizumi befuddled the nation by keeping his promise to visit the shrine—although he made his visit a few days before August 15.

In the hubbub of protests and outrage that followed, no one seemed to have noted what Koizumi said in a statement issued that day and repeated again in the presence of Emperor Akihito during ceremonies on the August 15 anniversary. Koizumi apologized for Japan's actions in the war and promised to maintain Japan's pacifist stance. Said Koizumi:

> With regard to the neighboring countries in Asia, for a period in the past, Japan embarked on aggression and colonial rule based on mistaken national policies and brought great disaster and suffering to these people. This has left unhealable wounds among the people of these countries that remain even up to this very day. Here, I accept with all humility this remorseful history of our country and convey to all victims of the war my heartfelt repentance and condolences with all respect. I believe that Japan should never again take the road to war. Before the souls of all those who died in the battlefields with unfailing faith in the motherland's future, I am reminded once again that the peace and prosperity that Japan enjoys today is founded on their noble sacrifice.

These are not the words of a closet militarist nor do they sidestep the question of Japan's war guilt and responsibility. But Koizumi's words and his visit to Yasukuni show the complexity, and even contradiction, in Japanese attitudes toward the war. On the one hand, as Koizumi made clear, most Japanese are profoundly pacifist. The military and militarism are discredited, even scorned. Despite suspicions in Beijing and Seoul, it is as impossible to conceive of Tokyo gearing up for new military adventures in Manchuria or Korea as it would be to imagine Washington preparing to go back to Vietnam. For the Japanese, the disaster of the Pacific war and the painful years of poverty and reconstruction which followed—to say nothing of prosperity of the '70s, '80s, and '90s—have convinced them that war is unthinkable.

On the other hand, Koizumi—and many Japanese—want to pay tribute to those millions who died in the lost war. This is not easy. Winners get to build *arcs de triomphe* and name boulevards for famous victories. Their dead—even those of dubious character and morals—are venerated as heroes. Losers have a more complicated task. No one builds monuments to defeat. Waterloo is the name of a train station in London, not a Metro stop in Paris. What nation, after a losing war, has ever paid tribute to the living or the dead, most of whom were dutiful patriots who served honorably though the cause proved futile, misguided, or worse?

Americans struggled with that question after Vietnam. Like Japanese soldiers returning home after World War II, American veterans from Vietnam were initially shunned and disparaged. Ultimately the dead from that conflict were honored brilliantly with Washington's Vietnam Memorial—a place where veterans can offer a prayer for their fallen comrades and where the stark vista of more than fifty-eight thousand names chiseled in the polished black stone records the insanity of war.

Koizumi clearly struggled with a similar conflict: How do you honor the war dead without honoring war? His task was made more complicated because of the names of the war criminals enshrined at Yasukuni. Should he forego paying tribute to the staggeringly large number of dead who were not war criminals, he asked, because of the presence of a few who were? In the end he didn't think that should stop him, even though many of his advisers suggested otherwise.

Koizumi's decision has ignited the war debate once again. Some believe he would have been better off avoiding the issue entirely. But then, wouldn't that have led to familiar charges that the Japanese ignore their war history? Losers at war, it seems, have no easy choices. □

Barry Hillenbrand, *a journalist now living in Washington, D.C., was Tokyo bureau chief for* Time *magazine from 1986 to 1992.*

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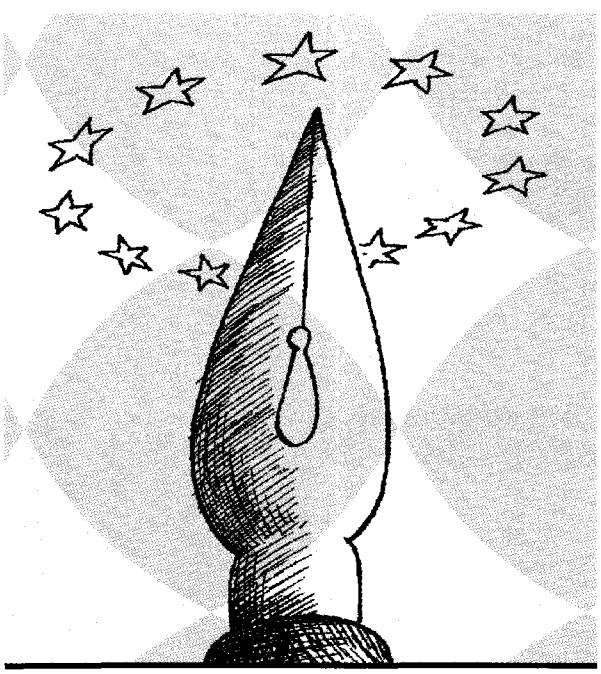
AXIOMS OF FAITH

Finding a language of belief

Anna Nussbaum

In mathematics one must accept certain axioms, certain truths. Ten in all. Most important, one must accept the theoretical concepts of a point, a line, and a plane. Their existence cannot be proved or disproved, but they are the beginning of understanding geometry. My instructor explained, "You can't prove anything from nothing....When you write a dictionary, if you don't have any words, you can't define any words."



We're a generation trying to write a dictionary of belief without words. Spoiled. Confused. Unwanted. Unformed. We have no place from which to begin. But faith persists, and all around me I find believers.

Dallas Thompson's head is never unplugged. He sits in the back row of my third-period journalism class wearing headphones. As the heavy metal crescendos in his ears, he scribbles down his thoughts on scraps of paper, thoughts which will later become 'zines (home-made magazines). He seems to write in time to the music. The music pouring from the earphones is loud; we listen in, though we cannot make out the lyrics. But Dallas's mind makes sense of the noise. In it he finds prophets who preach truth. I wonder if, for him, silence is noise. Dallas is a believer. He distributes vegan literature, and in the animal-product-free lifestyle he finds commandments and a strict code of conduct. He bathes once a week. He lives simply. He uses his earnings to buy high-priced organic foods. He recycles his plastic juice bottles, and every day he carries a lunch box to school. He carries a lunch box when other hard-core kids eat hamburgers and French fries and carelessly leave their cardboard trash behind. With other vegans, Dallas feels less alone. He knows, intuitively, that there is more to life than leisure, and he seeks ultimate meaning in a dairy-free diet. He tells me he wants to have the words "Vegan for Life" tattooed across his chest. "I'm not gonna pussy out and become a vegetarian like so many vegans do," he says. "I believe in veganism."

Like me, Tim Ross is an International Baccalaureate (IB) diploma student. Our classes are more rigorous than advanced placement and we are tested by international standards. Our exams are sent across the globe. The first-born son of strict Republican parents, one a non-practicing Jew and the other an atheist who was raised Presbyterian, Tim gets top grades in the hardest classes. He wins at international science fairs. He wants to go to Columbia University and then train to become an astronaut. He wants, more than anything, to make his parents proud. So he works hard. He takes a Russian-language class at the local community college, competes in Stephen Douglas debates, volunteers, and builds, builds, builds his résumé, as we all do. Tim is a decent guy. I envy his transcript.

Freshman year, Tim was baptized at Radiant Assemblies of God, a local fundamentalist church, six months after he joined its youth group. But his devotion dwindled and he no longer believes in Christianity. He's too smart, that's all. As he matured, the youth group didn't, or wouldn't, mature with him. They were still preaching about why you shouldn't kiss on the first date, and doing "trust falls," while Tim was struggling with existence of the Trinity and with materialism. There wasn't enough at Radiant for Tim, who always demands more from life and first visited the church alone. The church was too dogmatic. It never encouraged inquiry. In Tim's eyes, intellectuals are seldom believers and never fundamentalist Christians. And anyway, Tim has a new rite of initiation to anticipate. Getting into Columbia University will be very much a salvific event for him. Co-

Anna Nussbaum, *the winner of* Commonweal's *Younger Writers Contest, is a senior at Palmer High School in Colorado Springs, Colorado.* *Funding for the contest was made possible, in part, by a grant from the Lilly Endowment, Inc.*

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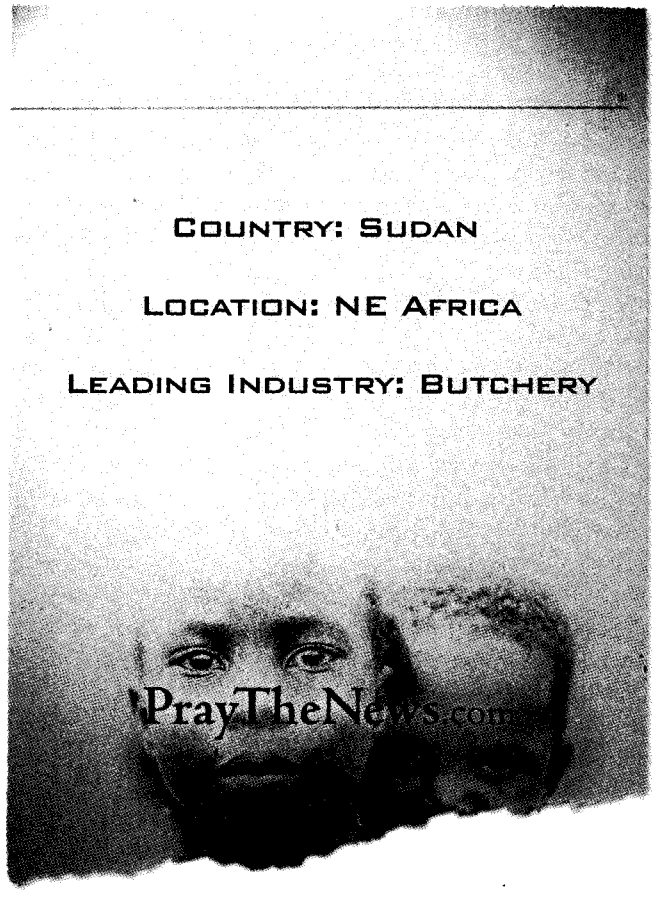
lumbia is for the elite, the chosen, the few. Tim will have earned a place among them and his life will, someday, be worth remembering. For now, all of his value can be typed onto an application and stuffed in a manila envelope to be scanned in fifteen minutes by a member of the admissions department. He seeks ultimate meaning within the boundaries of logic, intelligence, and achievement.

Katie Cline is a dancer, or at least she used to be. I met her in study hall. She went to a boarding school for dancers, but a year later returned to public high school. I guess she didn't make the cut. Still, she tends to her body religiously. She is anorexic: never eats a complete meal, and never gains a pound. She always carries a water bottle. Her legs are invariably smooth. Her skin is exfoliated and hydrated and immaculate. If she lets her discipline lag, she will no longer be recognizable as who she is: a dancer, and a member of the club. Katie doesn't go to church, but she still tries to win converts. "Anna," she says, "I can show you how to make a diet for yourself that you can live with." And, "Really, you should stretch at least half an hour every morning; it's the only way..." It is a kindness. Katie is sharing with me the orthodoxy behind her actions, the wisdom that guides her every step. Without her practices she wouldn't be who she is. Dance has trained her, and disciplined her. Katie seeks ultimate meaning in her body and in dance.

But are these faiths enough for a lifetime? Can everything be understood from them, and through them? Can they transcend one's individual life? And are they strong enough to build a life on?

I am at a party. A lot of people are drinking and, after a few beers, they have announced that they will not raise their children in a religious tradition. (I've noticed that when people are drunk they like to talk about God.) "I would just never do that to my kids," one says. "I'd let them decide for themselves about God. I wouldn't force it down their throats." They are passing on to their children the only religion they know, the religion of choice. This is a faith that makes them feel, as one of them says, "not really a part of any culture," that is, except a part of the consumer culture. They will raise their children to have choices. To survey the goods and choose the best buy.

For my peers, religion is but one choice in a world of choices. For me it is my beginning. It is the very soil in which I was planted. It is what happens every day. It is the prayers I say, or don't say. It is the questions I ask, the rituals I do. It is my parents. It is Sundays and holy days of obligation. It is the seasons. It is the source of frustration. It is dinner-table conversation. It is bad singing. It is my siblings. It is my identity. It is my limitation. It is the lens through which I was taught to see. It is my culture. I still choose every day, as my friends do. But I choose knowing that God expects something from me, and wondering what it is. I was raised Roman Catholic and that will never change, though it has changed me.



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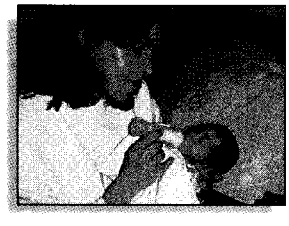

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I have two dear friends, Avi Goldman and John Thomas Ritter. Avi is Jewish. After his mother died of cancer, Avi was very angry at God. Still, he celebrated his bar mitzvah. His father and sister don't practice. He goes to temple alone. For two years after Avi's mother died, his father took him and his sister around the world. They slept in a tent and got around on public transportation. Avi was eleven at the outset and turned twelve on the trip. He has ten journals from that time. Avi wasn't raised to be religious, but Indonesia, India, and Thailand turned him into a passionate boy, and a believer. He struggles with the particulars, but still seeks to live a life of faith because he witnessed so many believers in his journeys and saw, firsthand, the limitlessness of God's creation.

John Thomas used to live in Massachusetts, where he attended Bethany Brethren Chapel. He doesn't talk about his faith with me or anyone else at school. Mostly, he just lives it. His mother and sister dress modestly. His family doesn't own a television set or a secular music collection. He misses jokes about sitcoms and rap music. When I am a guest at his house, at dinner with his family, the boys pull out the chairs for all the ladies, even their little sister.

The three of us—John, Avi, and I—are an unlikely trio. A conservative Protestant, and a reform Jew, and a Catholic feminist—sounds like the beginning of a bad joke. I am considerably more rebellious than the two of them, neither of whom dates. It's true that outside of school we often hang with different crowds. But we are still the best of friends because we are involved in a never-ending conversation. We share a common vocabulary of faith. We laugh with each other. We speak freely. I have more in common with Avi and John Thomas, with Muslims and Mormons, than with those who feel that every religion can be purchased, or returned for a full refund. Or with those who believe that every religion can be discarded on the basis of logic. Or with those for whom diets, or achievements, take highest priority.

Avi and John Thomas understand what believing is like. They understand its limitations, its frustrations, and its beauty. The three of us have words with which to discuss our lives. We compare and contrast customs, and discuss philosophies. We have each chosen a spoke of the same wheel to follow. It seems that we will each arrive at the center eventually if we continue on our paths.

It is an IB flex day and we don't have class. We are supposed to use this time to catch up on our studies. Avi turns to me in the library and asks me if I'll go for a hike with him. I am glad for an excuse not to do my homework. We drive to the mountains and start hiking the Mount Cutter Trail in Cheyenne Canyon. We make small talk, but I keep thinking about a friend's abortion. Avi asks me what I think about it. Avi is pro-choice. It's hard to have this conversation; most people just avoid talking about abortion. It's too painful. As soon as friends become sexually active, 'most everyone knows someone who has had an abortion. I need to speak, but don't know what I think or what I should say. So that day I tell Avi I think we, as a community, can do better than abortion. I tell him that abortion degrades women, and kills children, and haunts my friends. It haunts me. I tell him it asks too much of young girls. I tell him society forces girls and women to feel that they should take part in this honor killing; that remaining childless protects their integrity, their choices in life. I tell him all this, feeling that my church hasn't done enough to stop it, or to prevent it, or to change it. I tell him all this knowing that I am a part of the problem, and that I have not been there to help. It feels good to speak about it even though I know how strongly Avi disagrees.

The air is thin and crisp. We hike faster until our breathing becomes labored. The conversation winds its way to the top of the hill and off the trail. It climbs over rocks, and runs down the gravel to the road. Finally, Avi understands where I am coming from. I say something like "every life is sacred." He says, "Yeah. You're right. But I don't think I could live it...I mean the real world doesn't work that way...If it was my girlfriend, I'd still want her to have the abortion." Avi believes abortion is right in a wrong sort of way. But even if it is wrong, he can't live it, this belief, all alone. The society tells him it's supposed to be that way: one person, one choice. It's supposed to be true that the continuation of a pregnancy is every single woman's choice, but it's not. Husbands, bosses, boyfriends, bills decide. And alone we choose out of desperation and, well, loneliness.

Being Catholic doesn't give me the answers, but it does give me the questions.

Being Catholic doesn't give me the answers, but it does give me the questions. It gives me courage to ask hard questions because I'm not alone. "What if your best friend got pregnant tomorrow?" Avi asks. "I don't know," I answer. "I guess she'd have the baby." Easier said than done, but not impossible. In the lonely, fend-for-yourself world, maybe it's impossible. But in a family, a community, a friendship, a tradition where "these things happen," where miracles happen, where you are worth more than your résumé, anything seems possible. Where wine is turned into blood. Where forgiveness happens. Where the rich housewife and the homeless man drink from a single cup. And a dead man was resurrected to ascend into heaven. Where people, however flawed and foolish, believe, everything seems a little more possible. If this community can believe that the dead will rise again can they also believe that the child of an unmarried teen mother can be loved, can be valued, can be good?

One Holy Thursday the church lady asked me if I'd come up from my pew and have my feet washed. They needed

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someone from my demographic. Why not? I thought it would be fun. I sat on the stoop between a deaf Hispanic man who looked homeless and an elderly Polish immigrant who struggled with his shoes and socks. I looked out at the congregation. I saw some kids from my high school. I saw all their stories. The one who had to come. The one who came alone. The one who came because he loves the pomp, the kitsch, the culture of it all. The one whose mother is so depressed that she didn't get out of bed that day or the day before that or the day before that. The one whose mother is dead. They were all singing this sweet, haunting melody, *"Ubi caritas et amor, Deus ibi est."* The Polish man sat like a child on the step with his pants legs rolled up. When his turn came, one priest held his hands gently under the man's little white and blue legs, the other poured clear water over his bony old feet and yellowing toenails. Then the bishop leaned down and kissed the man's feet as he had kissed mine. The man wept, moaned, and cried out.

Moral axioms make mathematical axioms seem simple. No axiom is proved, so it requires imagination. I walk out into the night. Clean feet. Light heart. Maybe it was the singing or the quiet, or the men on the stoop, or the babies sleeping, but my eyes feel open. Open to see miracles. I look up and see the black sky, and the big white moon. I close my eyes and see the pews and the sea of people. I'm not alone, and under this sky seems a big enough place to begin. □

OTHER VOICES

Commonweal*'s contest for younger writers brought into our offices a rich diversity of voices, some unexpected, others heartening, still others harrowing. Some of the more thought-provoking essays are excerpted below.* THE EDITORS

Why I stay

In long conversations with friends about our personal faith journeys, I find myself slowly developing my own apologia for why I remain Catholic. I suppose it helps that I also have had to come up with a response to the perplexed questions of the Protestant women in my graduate theological classes who want to know how I can stay in the Catholic Church as an intelligent woman. (Really, they ask me that!) I can never give them a satisfactory response in the thirty-second time frame they allow, so I usually mumble some clichéd answer, knowing that I will probably never be able to explain to them how the church helps me to survive, and to stay reasonably sane in what appears to be an insane world. Besides, how can I explain that even though I might disagree with some of the church's teachings, I am committed to "staying in the relationship" because this is my church and my tradition and it still feeds me?

Their question reminds me that I once asked a Jesuit priest from India why he wasn't Buddhist or Hindu, since he always spoke with great passion and love for those traditions. His answer didn't satisfy me at the time, but now it is mine, too. "Why are you Catholic?" I asked him.

"Because I was born into a Catholic family," he said simply.

Like him, I know now that being Catholic is in the fiber of my being, just as being American is, and even if I were to leave the church, I know that it would not leave me.

Ann Naffziger *is pursuing her Master of Divinity and Master of Arts in Biblical Languages at the Jesuit School of Theology, Berkeley.*

Fully immersed

The checker in Aisle 4 at the supermarket stared at me. Unashamed, slack-jawed, she stared at me. Accustomed to stares as I was, I smiled with all the politeness I could muster and continued to load my institutional-sized groceries on the conveyor belt. She stared as I explained to my four-year-old why there are surveillance cameras at the checkout. She stared as I restrained my two-year-old in something like a half nelson to keep him out of the candy bin. She stared as I comforted my one-year-old, who was crying steadily and wanting a nap. She stared as I wrestled my way around my eight-month-pregnant belly and down to the bottom of the cart to retrieve the economy-sized box of diapers. As her shocked stupor subsided and she began to ring up my order, the checker in aisle four asked blankly: "You're having another one?"

"Yes." I had hoped that my reticent response would discourage her and make her return to her work, but I underestimated her horror.

"Are you going to stop, then?"

"Stop sleeping with my husband?" I thought to myself, but, of course, did not say. That is not what she was thinking, and I knew it, and she knew it, and the fourteen other people within hearing distance of Aisle 4 knew it. God knows why, but she needed to know how many children I had decided to have. And, apparently, not one more jar of peanut butter was going to pass through the scanner until she had her answer.

"I don't know," came my lame response.

"Don't you use anything?" All fourteen bystanders listened intently along with the checker to discover what kind of birth control I had been using (with such obvious ineffectiveness).

"Uh, we, um, use Natural Family Planning," I stammered as my face turned a brilliant shade of red.

"What's that?"

"It's, um, not using anything artificial, but paying attention to the woman's body to identify times of fertility." Clearly having classified me as a freak, the checker lost interest about a dozen words into my response and went about her business.

As I gathered my brood around me, my heart grew heavy with the realization that my life is, indeed, a counter-cultural oddity. It is difficult to enjoy being in the grocery store,

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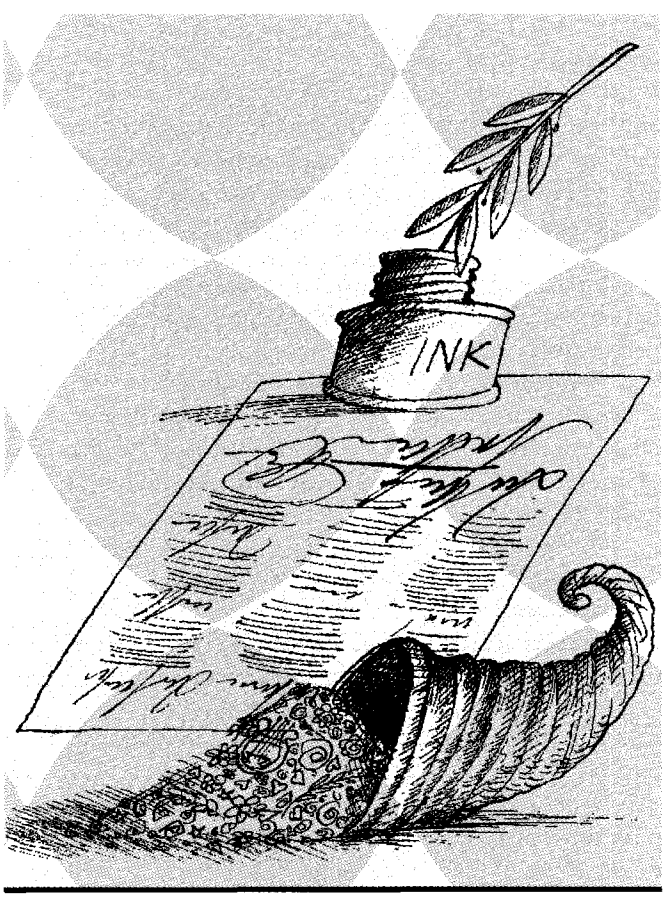
let alone the world at large, if I feel like an outcast. It is a constant challenge for me, a young Catholic mother, to feel integrated, whole. I am no otherworldly saint who leads a beautiful life of self-sacrifice and prayer in a secluded hermitage. I am fully immersed in this world. And still I treasure my faith in the Catholic church, the people of God—the wonderful, fallible, varied, human people—living both in this world and for the next. The faith that declares that the world is good is the same faith that challenges me to distance myself from many worldly ideas and practices. I am called to love this world, sinful as it is, and love God well enough to merit seeing him face to face. Being Catholic in contemporary America requires integrating my loves in this world with my love for God.

Grace M. Urbanski *writes from Milwaukee, Wisconsin.*

The search for authenticity

Do we need to have priests? I think so, and I doubt I'm alone in this. To be Catholic is to want, or to need, some mediating presence between the world and God. This is why we love the pope, even when we disagree with him.

I'll go further: to be human is to want, or to need, some mediating presence between the world and God. In modern America, that mediating presence is usually not a priestly one. It may be crystal, or Deepak Chopra, or a Taizé chant, or a Buddhist meditation, or a candle and a silly book about simplifying life when you're rich. But it's something.



And therein lies our opportunity. In *The Seven Storey Mountain*, Thomas Merton describes the hunger people had in the 1940s for some accurate and trustworthy spiritual guide to life. Do we hunger any less today? In 1975, Walker Percy wrote that evangelization might not work in half-Christian 1970s America, but it would certainly work in a pagan America in the year 2000. Would anyone really disagree?

I don't get much out of crystals, or Deepak Chopra, or candles, or silly books. I hunger for religious authority, and my sense is that I am not alone. I hunger because I'm human, of course; but my hunger is shaped by culture as well. I hunger because in America these days, there really is nothing to believe in. Born a generation after the 1960s, I've grown up with the feeling that I shouldn't trust the government, the church, the media, or anything else. I'd like to trust something, though, and I'm willing to trust the church.

Jason A. Spak *is a third-year student at the University of Michigan Law School.*

Who says the book is closed?

I teach catechesis of the Good Shepherd in a religious education program for three- to six-year-olds, where we talk about the women, not just the men, who followed Jesus, and we let the children create their own images of God. We try to teach them about the Mass, so they can better understand what they witness on Sundays, and in our classroom we have a tiny altar. It stands about a foot and a half off the ground, and there are miniature implements to go with it—a chalice, a paten, cruets, candles, and an altar cloth. Recently, one of the little girls set up the altar by herself and knelt down behind it. She carefully unfolded the cloth and smoothed it over the table. She gently placed the cruets on the altar and pretended to pour liquid into the chalice. Then she held up her little plastic host and the little bronze chalice high above her head, and whispered little prayers. I had not taught her these motions; she was imitating what she had seen at Mass, and was obviously unaware that, as it currently stands, she will never be afforded the privilege of the role of consecrator. A deep sadness filled me as I watched her, because I knew that this great potential I saw would, in all likelihood, be rejected.

Despite this sadness, I remain optimistic that I will see big changes in the church in my lifetime. And if not in my lifetime, then in my children's. Maybe my daughter will never have to hear the words, "You can't; you're a girl."

After all, when my parents were young the priest faced the wall, spoke Latin, and placed the host on tongues over a Communion rail. So, who says the church can't change? Who says the book is closed? The church is always growing and living. It is a human institution, inspired by a living Spirit—how else could it be? What is silenced today could be doctrine tomorrow. Just ask Thomas Aquinas □

Tara K. Dix *is a freelance writer from Chicago, Illinois.*

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HISPANIC CATHOLICS

'El futuro' is here

Timothy Matovina

The parishioners of Saint Leander's Church in Northern California were in conflict. As the date approached for the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, the revered patroness of the Mexican people, a threat that the annual parish Guadalupe celebration would be canceled loomed. That year, the December 12 feast fell on the third Sunday of Advent. Because the Sunday Mass takes precedence over feast days, the parish liturgical director had declared that no Mass for Guadalupe could be celebrated. But congregants of Hispanic descent were distraught and bewildered. How, they wondered, could a Catholic parish fail to offer their celestial mother proper honor on her feast day? After further consternation and discussion, however, the pastoral staff agreed to a compromise. A Mass in honor of Guadalupe would be celebrated at 5 A.M., early enough so as not to upset the regular Sunday Mass schedule. "How many would come at such an early hour anyway?" pastoral leaders reasoned. To their amazement, despite the cold, dark winter morning, by the time the Mass began a standing-room-only assembly had gathered to acclaim their patroness and fulfill their long-standing sacred tradition.

Such instances of misunderstanding, disagreement, and at times even open conflict are not uncommon as the Hispanic presence in U.S. Catholicism continues to expand rapidly. Of course, not all Hispanics are newcomers to the United States; in fact, Hispanic Catholics have lived in what is now the United States twice as long as the nation has existed. Subjects of the Spanish crown founded the first diocese in the "New World" at San Juan, Puerto Rico, in 1513 and, at Saint Augustine, Florida, in 1565, the first permanent European settlement in what is now the continental United States. But despite their long-standing presence, for much of U.S. history, Hispanics have constituted a relatively small and frequently overlooked group within U.S. Catholicism.

In the last half-century, however, the number and influence of Hispanics in the United States have increased dramatically. An influx of newcomers from such diverse locales as Puerto Rico, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Colombia, Peru, Ecuador, and Argentina, along with ongoing Mexican immigration, has added to the ranks of an established Hispanic population composed primarily of Catholics of Mexican descent. More important, Hispanic Catholic communities, previously concentrated in New York, the Southwest, and some Midwestern cities, now extend from Seattle to Boston, from Miami to Alaska. The 2000 census revealed that Latinos in the United States number some 35.3 million, 12.5 percent of the total population, and that they now compose the largest minority group in the country. Today, Hispanics are also the largest ethnic group within U.S. Catholicism; in the first decades of the new century, they will make up the majority of U.S. Catholics.

An expanding Hispanic presence is part of larger demographic shifts within U.S. Catholicism. A century ago, the U.S. Catholic Church was an overwhelmingly immigrant church of Northern and Southern Europeans. Today, the church, largely run by middle-class Catholics, descendants of those immigrants, has growing numbers of Hispanic, Asian, and African immigrants, along with sizable contingents of U.S.-born Latinos, African Americans, and some Native Americans.

In response to the increasing Hispanic presence, a number of English-speaking Catholics have made considerable efforts to work with their Latino co-religionists and offer them a sense of welcome. Particularly in the decades since Vatican II, women religious, clergy, and lay leaders at the national, regional, diocesan, and parish levels have invested significant amounts of time and material resources to help develop and expand ministries with Latino Catholics. On the national level, the Hispanic-led Encuentro 2000 held in Los

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Angeles, which gathered more than five thousand leaders from the diverse racial and ethnic groups in U.S. Catholicism, clearly illustrates recent ministerial efforts by and with Latinos. At present the twenty-six Hispanic bishops compose 7 percent of the U.S. hierarchy; approximately 80 percent of all dioceses and 20 percent of all parishes engage in ministry with Hispanics. These developments, which encompass initiatives to increase Spanish-language Masses, evangelization efforts, renewal movements, and feast-day celebrations, are visible signs that Catholicism in the United States is responding to this seismic shift in its demographic profile.

Despite the good intentions these success stories demonstrate, an alarming number of Hispanic Catholics feel alienated, rejected, and dissatisfied with Catholicism in the United States. One clear indication of these sentiments is Andrew Greeley's widely cited sociological research, which shows that some sixty thousand U.S. Hispanics "defect" from their ancestral religion every year—nearly 1 million since 1973. Most of these Latinos who have left Roman Catholicism have embraced Protestantism, especially in its Pentecostal and evangelical forms.

Analysis of the seeming disparity between increased Hispanic Catholic ministerial initiatives and the loss of Hispanic Catholics is varied. Many observers agree, however, that in contrast to most Catholic parishes, relatively small Protestant congregations are attractive because they provide a stronger sense of family and fellowship, a strict moral code based on clear biblical principles, a pronounced orientation toward mission, more indigenous Spanish-speaking pastors, and worship services in which Latinos can pray in their own language and cultural style.

It is not yet clear whether these Hispanic converts will persist in Pentecostal and other groups. Initial studies indicate that some Latinos maintain dual or even multiple denominational attachments; thus they may attend a Protestant congregation regularly for Sunday worship but celebrate baptisms, funerals, and other events in a Catholic parish. Other Hispanics in the United States follow the path of religious seekers; once they have left Catholicism their propensity for changing congregations or denominations again increases significantly. And some Hispanics do return to the Catholic fold, such as Mary Navarro Farr of San Antonio. After eight years in an evangelical church, Navarro Farr became upset with the anti-Catholicism in her congregation and was drawn back to a Catholic parish by "the treasure of the Eucharist, the maternal care of Our Lady of Guadalupe, and the music and sacred imagery" she remembered from her childhood. Despite such examples, there is no sign that the Hispanic leakage from Catholic ranks will abate in the proximate future.

To be sure, a number of Catholic parishes create hospitable environments in which Latinos experience a sense of familiarity and welcome that is similar to that offered in Protestant congregations. However, many analysts overlook a crucial difference experienced by Latinos in these two branches of Christianity: in Catholic communities, Hispanics may feel a sense of welcome, but in more autonomous Protestant congregations, particularly those of the Pentecostals and evangelicals, they are usually in charge. Intentionally or not, Euro-American Catholics who welcome their Hispanic sisters and brothers and practice "cultural sensitivity" frequently embody the subtle (and sometimes not-so-subtle) message that Latinos are guests and that English-speaking Catholics are the owners of the house. While hospitality and "cultural sensitivity" are an essential first step in ministry with Hispanics, often implicit is the notion that those in power will remain in power. At best, Hispanic traditions and religious expressions will be tolerated, but the established group will control and limit the conditions of this pluralism and diversity. For example, when Hispanics attempt to make a parish feel more like home by placing one of their own sacred images in the worship space or scheduling a Spanish Mass in a "prime-time" slot on Sunday morning, established parishioners frequently rebuff them with the claim that "our ancestors built this church" or "we were here first." If Hispanics challenge such a response, their Euro-American co-religionists often perceive them as being unappreciative of the welcome offered them.

...in Catholic communities, Hispanics may feel a sense of welcome, but in more autonomous Protestant congregations, particularly those of the Pentecostals and evangelicals, they are usually in charge.

The difference between receiving hospitality and feeling at home is not a new issue in U.S. Catholicism. European immigrant groups such as the Germans, Poles, Italians, Slovaks, Czechs, and Ukrainians, among others, staked out their own turf and created "national parishes." But the strategy of building ethnic enclave parishes has long since been abandoned in the United States. Latino Catholic leaders like Jesuit Allan Figueroa Deck bemoan this fact, noting that the national parish was a "fabulously successful approach to the pastoral care of immigrants for more than a hundred years." Still, Figueroa Deck and other Hispanic leaders conclude that in contemporary U.S. Catholicism national parishes are "not, practically speaking, viable for a host of reasons," especially the declining number of priests and the fiscal strain caused by abandoned inner-city national parishes of previous European immigrant groups.

In light of the impracticality of national parishes for Hispanics, many pastoral leaders assume that Hispanics will participate in existing parishes and assimilate into U.S. church and society. Indeed, as with European immigrants, a number of Hispanic Catholics learn English, move to the middle class and mainstream U.S. society, and, in many cases, sub-

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sequently practice their faith in more heterogeneous, English-speaking parishes. But unlike European immigration, which dwindled to a mere trickle after the enactment of restrictive U.S. immigration laws in the early 1920s, Hispanic immigration shows no sign of diminishing. Such factors as ongoing immigration, more consistent contact with their homeland than European émigrés who crossed the ocean, the tendency of Latinos to live in urban clusters, and their own efforts to retain their language and culture ensure that the Spanish tongue and Hispanic faith expressions will persist in U.S. Catholicism for the foreseeable future.

Thus U.S. Hispanic Catholicism finds itself in a precarious position. Hispanic Catholics look to their church leaders to support and accompany them in their struggles, faith development, and religious traditions, but at the same time many sense that the institutional infrastructure for Hispanic ministry lags farther behind. The shortfall of Hispanic clergy in particular poses a formidable obstacle in meeting the pastoral challenge. While various European immigrant groups suffered from a shortage of compatriot priests who identified with their customs, spoke their language, and represented their interests within the structures of U.S. Catholicism, none of these groups experienced a dearth of native clergy to the same extent as today's Hispanics.

Explanations for the lack of Hispanic vocations to the priesthood are varied, but many Latino leaders point to a history of scant educational opportunities, ethnic prejudice and outright discrimination in seminaries, strong kinship ties among Hispanics that deter prospective candidates from leaving the family circle, and cultural norms that conflict with the requirement of mandatory celibacy. Moreover, as sociologist of religion Ana María Díaz-Stevens argues, Latino Catholicism has a "matriarchal core." With the historic lack of indigenous Latino priests, Hispanic women have been consistently the primary transmitters of the faith and exercised autonomous authority in the devotional life of their people. While this matriarchal core continues to shape Latino Catholicism, enabling it to retain a formative role in Hispanic families and communities, the lack of Latino clergy gives Hispanics decidedly less access to decision-making processes in a church with a male hierarchy.

Of course, many Latinos populate territorial parishes that in effect are national parishes, since their congregations are overwhelmingly Hispanic. Not surprisingly, a number of Hispanics, especially recent immigrants, feel at home in these parishes. Similarly, Latino initiatives to establish or support diocesan Hispanic ministry offices, parish organizations, feast-day celebrations, and devotional practices help Hispanics create a home within the structures of U.S. Catholicism. The incident at Saint Leander's in California, in which persistent Hispanic devotees organized and celebrated the traditional Guadalupe feast at their parish, illustrates this point well. Such initiatives offer some hope that Latinas and Latinos will participate increasingly in the life, faith, and leadership structures of U.S. Catholic parishes and dioceses.

The progression from hospitality to homecoming, so ably met by the national parishes for previous generations of European immigrants, remains a challenge at the heart of the future of U.S. Catholicism. Like those European immigrants who sacrificed their time, energy, and scarce material resources to build and support their own national parishes, Latinos seek a sense of ownership in their parishes, worship, pious societies, and the wider church. In their pastoral letter on Hispanic ministry (1983) and their national pastoral plan for Hispanic ministry (1987), the U.S. Catholic bishops called for more widespread and effective ministry among Hispanics. But, as many bishops themselves observe, the issue is not so much one of pastoral vision and strategy as of implementation. There is no simple formula for pastoral responses applicable to all situations and communities. Concrete implementation strategies range from incorporating Hispanic religious traditions and sacred iconography into the worship life of local communities to fostering greater parity among Latinos and other leadership groups at all levels within the church. Each local context requires creative action that enables parish and diocesan leaders to promote a sense of belonging and ownership among Latinas and Latinos. Only in this way will the Catholic Church in the United States achieve another major step in the long process to forge a viable, vital Catholic community in a pluralistic church and society. □

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Celia Wren

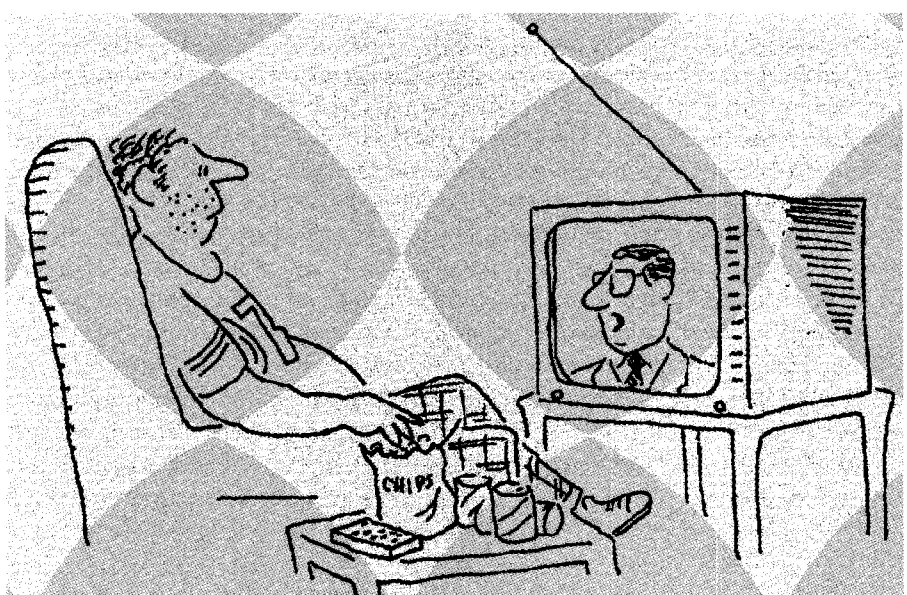
KILLER RATINGS

'Murder in Small Town X'

Desperate times call for desperate measures—in television as in all other fields. As the vogue for reality programming continues to roll, juggernaut-like, across the TV landscape, the networks in particular are scrambling for safety, brandishing a newly fabricated batch of high-concept shows like white flags raised in surrender. Sheer panic, rather than inspiration, must surely have been the motivating force behind Fox's embarrassing summer offering "Murder in Small Town X," which wrapped up on September 4, after seven cringe-inducing episodes.

Fueled though it was by reality-TV tropes, "Murder" was, rather remarkably, based on sheer fiction. Admittedly, creative casting and editing inevitably set shows like NBC's "Fear Factor" or Fox's "Temptation Island" at several removes from fact, but "Murder" yoked documentary and fiction together with a violence that was downright fascinating. The premise dispatched ten ostensibly ordinary Americans—a media planner from Chicago, a bartender from Staten Island, a medical student from Fort Lauderdale, etc.—to the small town of Sunrise, Maine, to solve a brutal multiple murder by a Peeping Tom-style killer. In the tradition of the classic detective story, the isolated milieu harbored a slew of colorful suspects with elaborate backstories and motives for criminal activity—Prudence Connor, the femme-fatale owner of an auto repair shop, for example, or Hayden DeBeck, the former businessman at the head of a sinister cult.

To cover their bases, the creators of "Murder" tossed in some staples from blockbuster horror tales. The picturesque town of Sunrise, with its sailboats bobbing in the harbor, turned out, in the vein of a Stephen King horror tale, to teem with occult-flavored phenomena: a vandalized grave, a cooler filled with blood, a set of fingers that turned up in a sardine can (packed in oil and mustard, forensic tests revealed). And the cinematography (the hand-held camera sequences in seemingly overexposed black and white, the shots of wildflowers twined into hex-like Xs) stole blatantly from 1999's *The Blair Witch Project*, a movie whose sensational popularity has made it a template for better-safe-than-sorry pop-culture artists.



"The following program is intended for mature audiences, but we're aware of the reality of the situation, so you can watch, too."

But the adherence of "Murder" to genre blueprints didn't stop there: From title sequence to closing credits, the show furnished viewers with a splendid opportunity to note how, in the course of the past year, stylistic tics from CBS's boffo "Survivor" have fossilized into reality-show convention. The candid frontal shots of individual "investigators" making catty remarks about each other copied the CBS program, as did the weekly bouts of voting that fueled resentment and rivalry by allowing participants to eliminate each other. Equally derivative was the grandstanding of "Murder" facilitator Gary Fredo, a real-life police sergeant who talked the sleuthing team through the baroque "rules" governing each episode (only slightly less complicated than the U.S. tax code, the "rules" involved cast-mates in answering the killer's quiz questions about potential clues and making nighttime forays to creepy locales, camera in hand). What the Renaissance was to the sonnet, the turn of the millennium has been to reality TV: the incubation period of a formula whose very restrictiveness is a source of its allure.

There is something soothing about conventions, of course, particularly in a whodunnit context. "The story must conform to certain formulas," W.H. Auden commented in "The Guilty Vicarage," the essay in which he confessed that "for me, as for many others, the reading of detective stories is an addiction like tobacco or alcohol." Prefacing the essay with a quote from Romans 7 ("I had not known sin, but by the law"), Auden analyzed the detective story in terms of its moral import: In the paradigmatic murder-mystery narrative, the detective returns a sin-beset community to a state of grace by isolating and expelling the guilty party. Detective fiction thus al-

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lows the typical fan, who "suffers from a sense of sin," to luxuriate in "the fantasy of being restored to the Garden of Eden."

Auden was writing about the classic, English mystery tradition, which encompasses, for example, the Sherlock Holmes and Father Brown tales. Fox's "Murder," by contrast, drew on that genre's quintessentially American variation—the "hard-boiled" detective story, exemplified by the works of Dashiell Hammett and Raymond Chandler. The hard-boiled mystery rebels against Auden's tidy guilt-catharsis blueprint: a sleuth like Hammett's Sam Spade operates in a world in which, as the critic George Grella observed, "crime is not a temporary aberration, but a ubiquitous fact." Innocence? The Garden of Eden? Try gangsters, crooked politicians, and a corrupt police force. Hard-boiled fiction paints the world in grays rather than blacks and whites: even the detective gets caught up in lies and seediness. When one of the "investigators" on "Murder" wore a wire into a strip joint and started ogling a writhing dancer, he was trekking in Sam Spade's footsteps.

Hard-boiled mysteries remain pleasurable, however, even as they depict a sin-infused world, because, while learning about the crime and its aftermath, at least *you know that you didn't do it*. For the space of a couple hundred pages, or a movie reel or two, you can wallow in guiltlessness. What made "Murder" striking—arguably marking a new kind of consumer complicity in the creation of American pop culture—is that it permitted no such confidence. We *did* do it. After all, had audiences not rewarded CBS for generating "Survivor," that series would have spawned no progeny. So viewers who tuned in to "Murder" on Tuesday nights as the summer waned (and Reader, I am one) had to fault their own voyeuristic impulses for that stagy film noir funeral, with the thunder raking the soundtrack—or for those shots of the "investigators" lounging in the Jacuzzi, gossiping frantically for the benefit of the camera. Culpability, it seems, can be measured in Nielsen ratings. Every generation gets the murder mysteries it deserves. □

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Who's in command?

Waging Modern War
Wesley K. Clark
Public Affairs Press $30, 480 pp.

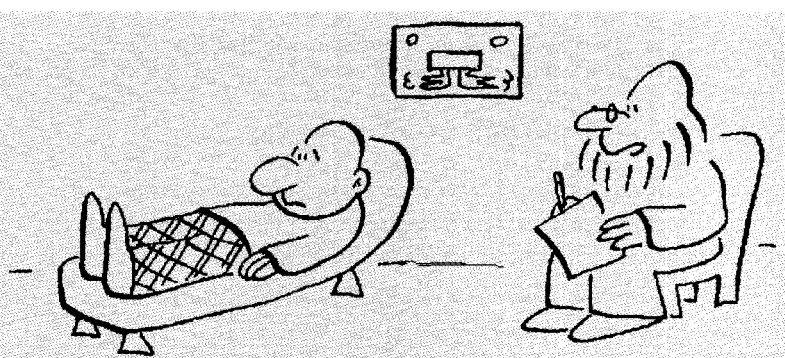
George Jaeger

Waging Modern War is General Wesley Clark's apologia of his conduct of NATO's Kosovo campaign, in which he prevailed against substantial odds, only to find himself relieved of command before his term was up. Pentagon critics have dismissed the book as Clark's revenge. More likely it will stand as the textbook critique of Washington's cavalier management of NATO's first and, one suspects, last military operation.

Contrary to the media spin, Kosovo was not a well-scripted campaign in which antiseptic American air strikes enabled the allies to romp to inevitable victory. Clark tells the story of an increasingly improvised operation in which the alliance, hamstrung by its own complexity and divisions, almost ran out of time and military options before, somewhat to its own surprise, Milosevic accepted NATO's demands to withdraw from Kosovo.

The story line is relatively simple. Once the short air campaign, begun on March 24, 1999, failed to persuade Milosevic to accept the Rambouillet formula, events quickly accelerated. Decisive air strikes on Serbia's nerve centers—favored by Washington, less by the Europeans—had to await elimination of Serbian air defenses. This proved harder to accomplish than expected. Milosevic then launched his genocidal attack on Kosovo's Albanian population, a decisive mistake since it reinforced allied resolve, even though it exacerbated NATO's military problem. For more aircraft were now needed to chase Serb ground forces in Kosovo, which diffused the mission and led to debates about priorities.

As the bombing dragged on and civilian casualties and the Chinese Embassy fiasco captured the front pages, NATO nations became even more insistent on the political importance of keeping military and civilian casualties low. Concurrently, pressures increased for a bombing pause to allow U.S. ambassador Richard Holbrooke to resume negotiations. Clark vigorously resisted, convinced that, once suspended, military action would never be resumed and Milosevic would have won the game.



"A defeatist attitude, eh?—Well, you'll just have to learn to live with it."

Clark describes what it was like to "work these issues." His underlying conviction was that, having engaged Milosevic, the alliance simply could not afford to lose the only war NATO has ever fought without risking its credibility and most likely its survival. It was up to him, therefore, as supreme allied commander, to maintain unity, gather resources, and preserve the commitments of various nations to succeed—in short, to apply decisive force.

As it turned out, it was Clark's other role, as commander of U.S. forces in Europe, the role in which he was under Joint Chiefs of Staff command, which actually turned out to be his most serious challenge. Clark had got the NATO job, not because his colleagues liked him, but because he was indisputably the best qualified. An intense, brilliant, youngest-ever three-star general, a Rhodes Scholar, half Jewish and a devout Catholic, Clark was hardly the model of the standard career general. He had been moved from his planning berth on the JCS to become Holbrooke's senior military assistant in the tortuous negotiations over the Bosnian war that culminated in the Dayton agreements. He knew the Balkan situation and had met and negotiated with all the key players. As the showdown with Milosevic loomed, he was clearly the right man to lead the NATO forces.

But getting the job and his fourth star was the easy part; conducting the war was something else.

Clark writes that he had somewhat naively hoped Defense Secretary William Cohen and the Joint Chiefs would give him the lead in strategy and tactics and full material support to conduct the war, as doctrine for theater commanders prescribed. However, Clark quickly learned that this would not be the case. There was deep skepticism in the

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Pentagon about "Madeleine's war," and dogged resistance, particularly from the Army, to diverting resources earmarked for other strategic plans. Clark argued with increasing exasperation that he was running the only war in which American and allied forces were actually engaged. Surely, Pentagon preparedness for hypothetical new wars in Korea and Iraq could be deferred somewhat until we had won the war at hand!

Although logical, the argument ran counter to perceived Washington "realities." The Pentagon—restrained by post-cold-war budgeting, uncomfortable with a president who remained an elusive presence, and wary of politically driven interventions—saw its interest as circumscribing the Kosovo mission. The Army, in particular, was furiously anxious to avoid a ground campaign on difficult terrain, perhaps even if this ultimately risked making a deal.

This basic conflict haunted Clark's relations with both Cohen and the chiefs. Their response was to keep him on an extraordinarily tight leash while often remaining painfully slow to approve target lists and plans. Clark attributes some of the resultant stress to bureaucratic complexities in Washington and in his own dual command. Even so, he became increasingly disturbed as the air campaign dragged on. The alliance began showing signs of strain and it became clear that planning for an allied ground operation and the use of Apache helicopters against Serb ground forces in Kosovo could become crucial.

Clark argued forcefully, therefore, that merely starting the planning process would send a powerful signal of NATO's resolve to Milosevic. He had strong support from the UK and several others, but clearly failed to convince his Washington masters.

Quite the opposite, in fact. Clark was pointedly not asked to attend the NATO Fiftieth Anniversary Summit in Washington in late April. When he went anyway, the president, Cohen, and the chiefs gave him an icy brush-off. He was similarly excluded from a White House review of the war because it would "put too much pressure on Cohen."

The endgame, during which Clark kept up the air pressure on major targets while Milosevic conceded in a complex international pavan, came rather unexpectedly in early June. The key was that the damage had been increasingly substantial, the alliance had held, and Clark had done his job. A final flurry involved Russian efforts to obtain a sector in the Serbian part of Kosovo. Clark again prevailed, insisting that this would amount to de facto division and give Milosevic the last word.

Not only Clark, but all the Europeans, were therefore stunned when, in late July, he was abruptly relieved of command, two months before his term would have been up. In NATO's first combat test since the days of Dwight Eisenhower, the dilemmas and stresses this brilliant and deeply dedicated American soldier-diplomat faced under its "dual hatting" arrangement had clearly not been respected or even understood in Washington.

Waging Modern War is not a comprehensive analysis of the moral and political implications of the Kosovo crisis. Instead, Clark has written a poignant, highly instructive account of his professional performance as NATO's most senior soldier; and in the process written a textbook for the future. Some of its key lessons are that "coercive diplomacy," as in Bosnia and Kosovo, is the most likely scenario our forces will confront in the future; that military thinking must therefore be flexible enough to accept and deal with other-than-planned scenarios; that our command structures have become too complex to be effective; and that operations and alliances become severely strained when we give ourselves a special status and seem unwilling to think creatively or share risks and roles with others.

The price we paid in this case is the new impetus the Kosovo operation gave to the development of an independent European force. As one European defense minister said afterwards: "We'll never do this again." □

George Jaeger *is a retired senior Foreign Service Officer who served as chairman of NATO's political committee and has extensive experience in the Balkans.*

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A MORAL ANTHOLOGY

Kosovo
Contending Voices on Balkan Interventions
Edited by
William Joseph Buckley
Eerdmans, $35, 528 pp.

John Langan

Little more than two years ago the war waged by NATO against Serbia for the sake of Kosovo suddenly came to an end. Since then Slobodan Milosevic has lost power in Yugoslavia and is being tried as a war criminal; Albanian nationalism has challenged the stability and integrity of Macedonia; Kosovo is not regularly on the front page, but it is neither forgotten nor resolved.

One of the unavoidable risks in writing about current and continuing conflicts such as Kosovo is that rapid changes and the passage of time will cause even the clearest analyses and the most persuasive arguments to seem obsolete or at least out of focus. This is not a risk that the present volume, which was put together in the second half of 1999, completely escapes. But there are abundant compensations for the loss in temporal immediacy. For this is a collection that has an instructive variety of approaches clustered around its central topic.

Buckley has brought together sixty-seven pieces from eyewitnesses, public decision makers, historians, ethicists, human-rights activists, and others. The voices he draws on belong to Americans and Europeans, to Serbs and Kosovars, to participants and commentators. They articulate, from a variety of standpoints, the recurring themes of justifying or condemning intervention, limiting force, bringing about reconciliation, transforming the culture of the region. There is a very compressed but enlightening history of Serbia by Tim Judah, along with a self-justifying interview given by Milosevic; several Serbs are scathingly critical of the West. The reader who works through such materials can build an understanding of the conflict which neither excuses nor demonizes the Serbs. But it is not surprising that the opinions presented cluster around qualified acceptance of Western policy and pointed objections to its belated and inconsistent implementation.

Both the effort to justify the intervention and many of the criticisms of it rely on the categories of just-war thinking. The editor himself uses the just-war tradition as the basis for the pointed criticisms of U.S. policy that he appends to the pieces contributed by Morton Hal-

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perin, director of the Policy Planning Staff in the State Department at the time of the Kosovo operation, and by General Wesley Clark, who was Supreme Allied Commander, Europe, during the crisis. It is interesting that these are the only essays that receive this special attention, a reflection of the fact that the project has a dual focus: one on description and analysis of the conflict in Kosovo and the other on decision makers in Washington. The collection gives little attention to European perceptions of the crisis and to the tensions created by the differences in perception and reaction between the United States and its Western allies. This, I would argue, goes hand-in-hand with a tendency to see the conflict in moral rather than political terms. So it is a matter for regret rather than surprise that the only serious discussion of Russian interests and policy in the crisis is found in the essay by Zbigniew Brzezinski, who shows that his distrust of Moscow has not been lessened by the end of the cold war.

A collection like this can have neither the merits nor the dangers that come from elaborating a single consistent argument. It is more like a book of reference, an anthology of political and moral reasoning, or a casebook on a complex topic. To a very large extent the editor has worked with material that had already been published; this helps to give us a sense of the contours of the debate as it occurred, but as a result the opportunity for broader reflection which would naturally have occurred in some more extended interpretive articles, has been missed. Too many of the pieces are short-breathed; and the effect of reading them in quantity is wearisome.

Why then should we bother about a weighty book on a small crisis? The most provocative answer comes from Veton Surroi, an Albanian publisher and political activist, in one of the last essays in the book. Surroi sees the Kosovo war as the point at which "a whole century of totalitarian ideologies was about to enter into transition toward an expected century of the building of democracy." He sees Serb practice in Kosova (the Albanian spelling) as the distillation of fascism, degenerate communism, and a form of apartheid imposed by Serbs on Albanians. The issues raised by the conflict can only be resolved in connection with the West's redefinition of its tasks after the end of the cold war and with the integration and interdependence achieved by the European Union. Seen in this way, the war in Kosovo is a hinge or "cardinal" conflict, which, we can reasonably hope, replaces the genocidal, totalitarian regimes of the twentieth century with a pan-European coalition of societies committed to human rights and European integration. This view of the conflict treats it as the aftermath of issues left unresolved by the great wars of the twentieth century rather than as the continuation of tribal and ethnic struggles going back to the Byzantine and Ottoman empires. It makes less surprising the occurrence of significant periods of harmony in the past, and it makes the separation of populations ("ethnic cleansing") less appealing as a solution.

The war in Kosovo differs from the Gulf War in that it has been fought for

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the protection of the human rights of an imperiled minority, not for the defense of a sovereign state. This is a point that is welcomed by Vaclav Havel, in a characteristically humane and penetrating address to the Canadian parliament; but it causes dismay to Henry Kissinger, who shows his customary wariness about according universal values or moral absolutes a determining role in the shaping of American foreign policy. The contrast here reminds us that while NATO's war in Kosovo was short and confined, it also brought back in a new form some of the oldest and broadest issues which confront us as a society that has both a history of separateness and global interests and responsibilities. □

John Langan, S.J., *is the Joseph Cardinal Bernardin Professor of Catholic Social Thought at Georgetown University.*

THE BARBER OF CAVIL

The Truth of Power
Intellectual Affairs in the Clinton White House
Benjamin R. Barber
W.W. Norton, $24.95, 256 pp.

Alan Wolfe

Benjamin Barber's book has two objectives. One is to offer reflections on the age-old relationship between truth and power. The other is to provide a breezy, opinionated, and gossipy account of Barber's meetings with Bill Clinton. The latter project succeeds much better than the former.

Although Barber is by profession a political philosopher (*Strong Democracy: Participatory Politics in a New Age,* University of California Press, 1990), he has little that is original to say about the eternal questions posed by Plato and Machiavelli, let alone the more contemporary versions of Bourne, Orwell, Milosz, and Havel. "Intellectuals rarely have the truth," Barber notes, "while the president rarely has much power." Expressed at that level of generality, there is something to what he says. But in most concrete situations, including the ones in which Barber himself was involved, intellectuals have a distance from events that often gives them more access to truth than politicians. Moreover, as we can now see in the case of George W. Bush, presidents have considerably more power to shape what passes for the truth than do people who teach at universities.

Nothing much has changed since Plato went to Syracuse intent on instructing its tyrants. Intellectuals have things to say that politicians do not want to hear. If intellectuals want to get their word across, they have the choice of exemplary witness at the cost of isolation from power or flattery and duplicity at the cost of lack of integrity. Barber, by his own account, leaned in the latter direction. Clearly loving the attention the president lavished on him, Barber rarely if ever paused to tell Clinton that the policies he was pursuing were dangerous or self-destructive.

The fact that we know the extent to which Barber fled in the direction of intellectual cowardice helps explain why his book works better as diary than as theory. For a man who describes himself as self-important, Barber is pleasingly self-deprecating. Invited to a meeting with Clinton and other intellectuals at Camp David in 1995, Barber admits to squandering his opportunity to say something intelligent to the president in the receiving line. He also admits that he tried to grab a seat at the center of the conference table so that the president and first lady would have to look directly his way. Barber knows when he speaks too long and comes across as openly didactic. He is also willing to enter into the bad graces of a possible future president by noting how ill suited Vice President Al Gore was for intellectual give-and-take.

So honest is Barber about the gaffes he made that one wonders why he continued to make them. Readers may have forgotten, as I did, that Barber's name was once floated as a possible chairman for the National Endowment of the Humanities. One reason not to remember Barber's possible nomination is that anyone with a grain of understanding of how Washington works would have quickly concluded that Barber's chances of getting it were nil. Having been burned in the brouhaha over Lani Guinier, Clinton was not going to pick someone with a long list of publications for a sensitive job. Even if he were so inclined, Barber, from New Jersey, had none of the clout with influential senators that the eventual nominee, Mississippi's William Ferris, had. Given so many examples from Barber's own hand of his long-windedness, one can only imagine the reaction of Clinton aides as they thought about

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how he would testify before Congress. But Barber hungered after the job and, knowing better, took it badly when he was passed over. He even penned a letter of regret in which he somehow blended the future of democracy, the future of the NEH, and the future of Ben Barber. He caps off his description of the whole business by noting that the length and tone of his letter were reason enough why he never should have been considered for the job in the first place.

Just as Ben Barber comes off as human in *The Truth of Power*, so does Clinton. Barber is not one of those liberals who dropped Clinton after he signed welfare reform and brought on Dick Morris to triangulate. Nor is he one of those centrists who, disgusted with Clinton's personal behavior, retreated to private life. Barber likes Clinton as a person, so much so that he reminds the reader far too often of the "affair" he thinks he is having with the president, even to the point of comparing himself, sans sex, to Monica Lewinsky. He writes persuasively about how Clinton's mind works, not as an intellectual in the learned sense of the term, but as a brilliant synthesizer who can express the essential points of any argument that engages his attention. Barber believes, against the grain of conventional wisdom, that Clinton "is a man whose democratic career is long from over." And, displaying the rhetorical overkill to which he so frequently admits, Barber daydreams of Clinton "that he will become the first 'President of the World.'" It is as if Clinton's personal and political self-destruction pales in comparison to the fact that he read and could cogently summarize Barber's *Jihad v. McWorld* (Ballantine, 1996).

It can be said with some certainty that Ben Barber has thought a lot more about Clinton than Clinton ever thought about Barber. Clearly, the professor saw something resembling himself in the president. "He has the narcissist's gift of making conversation about him feel like conversation about you," Barber writes, an insight gained from Barber's own tendency to see his minor political setbacks and defeats as losses for the cause of democracy. Put Barber and Clinton in the same room—I, too, was in that room at Camp David—and it is not clear who would go on at greater length. My memory is not as good as Barber's; I wasn't taking notes. But I have the distinct recollection of Barber unable to stop talking and Clinton patiently listening.

Barber recounts many such meetings, including one in the summer of 1998 in which a number of intellectuals were once more invited to Washington to talk to Clinton, only this time it was Hillary. This was a meeting that I decided not to attend, and the reason was not because I knew that if I accepted Sid Blumenthal's invitation, I would have to listen to Ben Barber instead of enjoying another day in Wellfleet with my children. Barber writes that at this meeting, Hillary "was, in some oblique manner, well, taking over." Since that was indeed clear from the invitation, the whole business raised a serious question for me. By that summer, the bloom was off the Clintons. Like Barber, I am not sure how to speak truth to power, but one

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option, when power begins to corrupt, is not to speak at all. With a president nakedly lying and a first lady clearly trying to find an outlet for her ambitions, it did not seem, at least to me, the appropriate time to attend a seminar in the White House.

The Truth of Power ends on a note of regret. "I wish the small band of intellectuals whose special provenance ideas were supposed to be, the handful to whom I was privileged to belong, who from time to time had a hearing in the White House—I wish we had made more of our chance." And I wish Barber had made more of his chance, in writing a memoir of these exciting years, to say how such encounters could have been done differently. □

Alan Wolfe's *most recent book is* Moral Freedom *(Norton).*

EYES WIDE SHUT

Night of Stone
Death and Memory in Twentieth-Century Russia
Catherine Merridale
Viking Books, $29.95, 402 pp.

Susan McWilliams

When my mother, a psychoanalyst, visited Russia three years ago, her university hosts were eager to explain the Russian mind. One woman, during a dinner gathering, thought a typical Russian joke would be a good way to begin.

"Life is very, very difficult," the joke-teller said. She paused, took a dramatic breath, readying her audience for the punch line. "Fortunately, it is very, very short!"

The assembled Russians exploded into laughter. Or perhaps more accurately, the assembled Russians grunted their appreciation, threw back shots of vodka, and poured themselves another round.

Death is no joke in Russia, so much so that it has become a joke. As the Western media have reported, Russians are dying at alarming rates. Russia's population plummeted from 148.1 to 146 million during the 1990s, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, which also forecasts that the decline will accelerate, leaving the population at 118.2 million by 2050. The average life expectancy for a Russian man, says the World Health Organization, is fifty-six years. Deaths now outpace births by a ratio of about 1.5 to 1.

It is no exaggeration to say that in Russia today, death is more prevalent than life. For Western observers, especially those who believed that an infusion of capitalist democracy always makes the least off better off, and that the post-Communist era would usher in new prosperities, these statistics are troubling at best. But Russia's human decline also raises bigger political questions.

In *Night of Stone*, historian Catherine Merridale sets out to document the veritable parade of disaster that visited Russia and its neighboring republics during the twentieth century. A steady stream of blood it is, from the familiar goriness of the Stalinist purges and the Nazi siege of Leningrad to the little-known tragedies of dekulakization, in which the Communist Party killed or dispossessed countless undesirables in the name of collectivization, and the great famine of 1931–32, in which between 5 and 7 million people starved to death. That's not to mention the two other major famines, 1921–22 and 1946–47, and the shorter-lived but still fatal "hungers" of 1917, 1919, and 1924. That's not to mention World War I, which took between 1.6 and 2 million Russian lives. That's not to mention the postrevolutionary Red Terror, when the Bolsheviks began to execute, in what would become a perverse national tradition, their real and imagined enemies. And that's not to mention the brutality of the revolutions themselves, beginning with 1905's Bloody Sunday.

On these terms alone, Merridale's history is numbing—numbing because it is so bleak, but also because it's a secret history. The Soviets never told these tales themselves, at least not publicly. Though perestroika, glasnost, and later the dissolution of the USSR now make it possible to discuss such topics, Russians tend to keep quiet. The accounts of these tragedies have come in the form of individual autobiography. Certainly, Merridale is the first to lay out the damage in all its gruesome scope and impact. Her research leads to the only conclusion it can: Although it is impossible to number the dead, the dead somehow still exist in the land of the living.

So Merridale turns to the living to ask the hard questions. How have the Russians come to understand their last bru-

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tal century? How have they, to use a decidedly Western term, coped? What does it do to a person, and what does it do to a society, when the national pastime is waiting for the next bad thing to happen?

In interviews with witnesses and survivors, Merridale finds that the answers aren't easy to come by. Russians have made a habit of dissociating, of speaking in fragments and tangents, of interjecting, "Don't you want another cup of tea?" into difficult moments. Merridale tries to set up group interviews to make for better conversational flow, only to find that Russians don't do dialogue.

It is only when Merridale remembers the words of Nadezhda Mandelstam, the wife of poet-turned-prisoner-turned-casualty Osip Mandelstam, that she begins to break through. "In our sort of life people had to shut their eyes to their surroundings," Mandelstam wrote in her chilling memoir *Hope against Hope*. "To shut your eyes like this is not easy and requires a great effort." During the Soviet era, there was always a reason to be silent. There was always a reason not to talk.

The dead cannot speak. In Russia, often, neither can the living. Merridale learns to listen not to her interviewees' words, but to the spaces between their words. Within those silences, she unearths the bodies.

In the officially atheist, consciously mortal Soviet world, the dictate of eternality was: "The only thing we can call immortal is our labor." What does that mean for the Soviet experiment and for the former Soviets, then, when after seventy years of work that labor turns out not to mean anything? If that work was all a mistake, what did they do it for? And what is worth doing now?

Memory, for the Russians, can be a kind of nightmare. The urge always to look, like the diligent and eager workers in a Soviet propaganda poster, toward a utopian future—a future in which there is no past—might be the strongest legacy of a culture of death. But silence, Merridale tells us, has its own violence. □

Susan McWilliams *is a graduate student in political philosophy at Princeton.*

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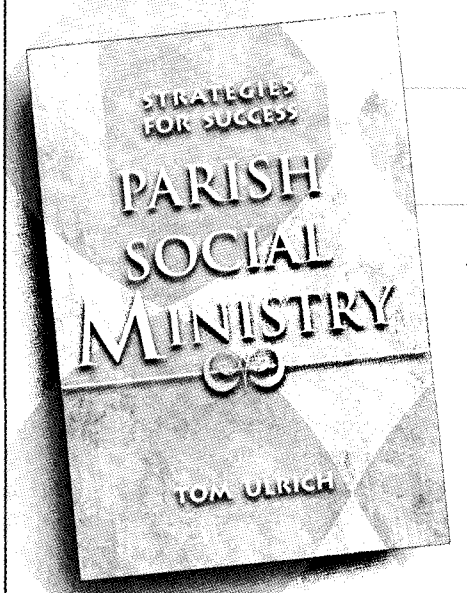
TOM ULRICH



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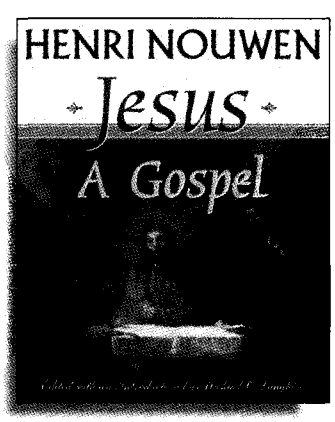

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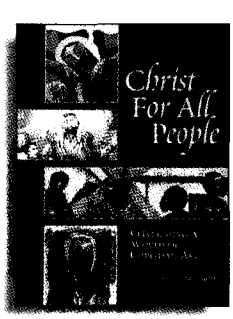

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THE IRISH SOPRANOS

The Rackets
Thomas Kelly
Farrar, Straus & Giroux, $24, 384 pp.

Tom Deignan

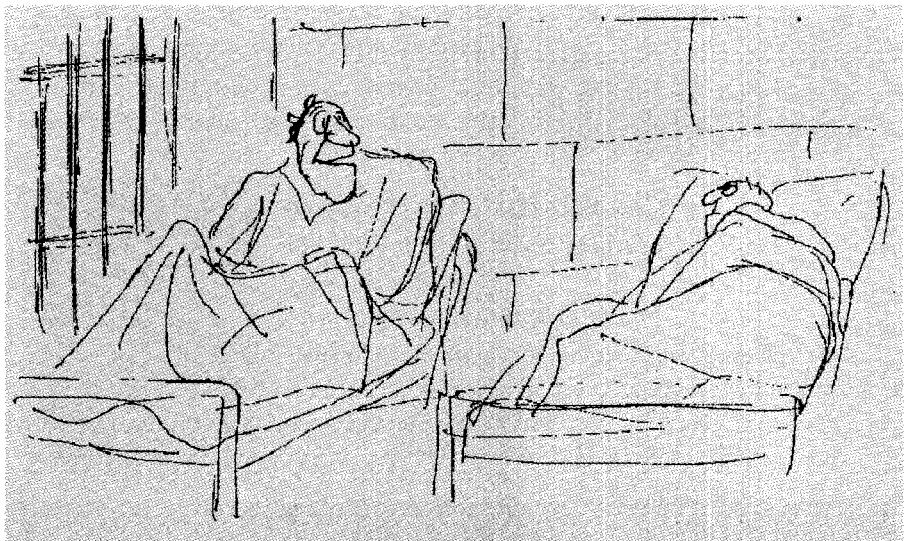
The Tara Irish Gift Shop on 207th Street in Manhattan, way uptown in Inwood, recently announced that it would close its doors forever. For years the shop, with its Claddagh trinkets and racks of the *Donegal Democrat*, had been a merely vestigial Irish presence in an enclave that had long since become an outpost of the Dominican Republic.

Tom Kelly knows old and new Inwood intimately, as the Teamster-turned-novelist makes clear in his bloody new union saga *The Rackets*.

> When Liam was born there had been forty-nine Irish bars in the neighborhood; when he had his first beer at thirteen there had been about twenty. Now there were maybe five, all populated by a few toothless ghosts, waiting for the afterlife to begin.

The Rackets is Kelly's follow-up to his first book, *Payback*. The novels are similar in many ways. Each centers round a blue-collar kid who made good, but who must return to the 'hood to settle a score. Corpses and profanities are plentiful. Soft-handed yuppies are scorned. Good and evil duel to the death.

The Rackets, however, has grander ambitions. At its best, it does for New York's working-class enclaves what *Bonfire of the Vanities* did for Gotham's ultrarich. Kelly gives his various ethnic subcultures thick social landscapes, their own language and psychology, politics and mores. On this score, Kelly ranks up there with Denis and Pete Hamill, and with Jimmy Breslin (who, incidentally, makes a cameo in *The Rackets*). Kelly draws up a large, impressive, even diverse, cast of Irish cops and gunrunners, Italian mobsters and mistresses, Russian immigrants and killers, saints and scoundrels. Queens, Inwood, Brooklyn, and Jersey are the settings. The struggle to move from working- to middle- (or criminal upper-) class are both poignant and pathetic. Yes, you will be reminded of "The Sopranos."



"Wow! I dreamed I was pure as the driven snow and innocent as a newborn babe!"

"Only in an Irish family," one racketeering character laments, "can the guy who...becomes a millionaire...be the black sheep."

At times, Kelly relies too heavily on the trappings of his genre. Things that could be left ambiguous or implied are needlessly made explicit. Characters in *The Rackets* tend to be of the black hat/white hat variety. Jimmy Hoffa's cynical epigram, "Every man has his price, what's yours?" is meant to set the tone. But we quickly learn who will or won't sell out. Kelly's moral compass is more *Christ in Concrete* than, say, *On the Waterfront*. (Interestingly, unlike those labor classics, the church is only a minor presence in this tale of contemporary New York.)

Kelly's protagonist, Jimmy Dolan, organizes public appearances—a job Kelly himself held under David Dinkins—for a no-nonsense white Republican mayor with a bad comb-over. A scuffle with mobbed-up Teamster Frankie Keefe costs Jimmy his job. That Jimmy's saintly dad, Mike, is challenging Keefe for a union leadership post means that both Dolans will soon be in grave danger.

Soon we meet Tara O'Neil, Jimmy's ex from Inwood, and Liam Brady, a sort of urban gun nut, who becomes Jimmy's bodyguard when Jimmy is forced to challenge Keefe in his father's place. Tara and Jimmy flirt, and confront their turbulent past. Jimmy and Liam (not an anti-Semitic, black-helicopter type of gun nut, Kelly assures us) also spar, though we never really doubt Jimmy's loyalty to salt-of-the-earth Inwood. An interesting twist might have been to give Jimmy a close white-collar friend from the dreaded 'burbs. But Kelly's only sin against class loyalty is to have Jimmy living—briefly—with a contemptible socialite.

The tight union election gives Kelly reason to ratchet up the violence. Ruthless, up-and-coming Russians, and calculating criminal/informer types make life difficult for the old-time mob. ("Keefe had brilliantly played both sides of the fence for years. As a top-echelon informer he fed both friends and enemies alike to keep himself in power.")

Kelly is laudably ruthless when it

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comes to who lives and dies in *The Rackets*. The novel's most memorable descriptions and stinging asides ("Liam wondered about [an immigrant] traveling ten thousand miles to sell Duracells on the A train") capture its great strength: Kelly's feel for New York's less fashionable people and precincts. The people, it so happens, who keep the city up and running.

The resolution of broader social conflict—cop shootings, racism, the class resentment and impoverished past of white ethnics—is handled less convincingly. Kelly's negative view of Giulianified New York feels a bit glib. In a Saint Patrick's Day parade scene, Jimmy stares at his loathsome ex-boss, the mayor, for whom "suburbanites howled...[and the mayor] validated their abandonment, their white flight...He vanquished the grubby panhandlers, the bums, the squeegee men, the dangerous darkies, put the welfare cheats in their place. 'We love you, Mayor!' screamed a sixtyish woman next to him wearing a Massapequa High School jacket."

When Jimmy tells the lady to "Shush up" she "wheeled on him and came up on her toes, a thick homemaker finger in his face. 'F--k off, buster,' she growled in toxic Brooklynese."

Troubling as Giuliani's excesses have been, it's important to note that New York's own excesses—yes, including those once ubiquitous panhandlers and squeegee men—paved the way for his ascendancy. Following Kelly's "homemaker" back to Massapequa would also shed some light on New York's recent complex evolution.

Kelly, of course, is not writing a political treatise. Like *Payback* (picked up for a film by tough-guy playwright/director David Mamet), *The Rackets* is a slambang thriller built on shrewd social and psychological observation. It's funny when it should be, and as authentically New York as a deafening subway screech or a dirty-water hot dog. □

Tom Deignan, *an editor and columnist for the* Irish Voice *in Manhattan, is working on a novel called* Staten Islanders. *He has taught history, English, and film at CUNY and Saint John's University.*

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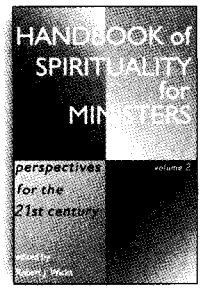

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(Continued from page 4)

hind the interference—the Saint Joseph Foundation, Catholics United for the Faith, and canon lawyer Alan Kershaw in Rome—might be needed!

DONATA GUERRA
Cary, N.C.

With Friends like these

Regarding Grant Gallicho's "Got Religion?" (August 17): I took the Beliefnet test a few weeks ago as well, and I came out as 100 percent Orthodox Quaker—and of course, we look down on you Liberal Quakers as cafeteria Friends.

Amusing to note that in the August 13 issue of *Newsweek*, there is a piece about the Belief-O-Matic quiz that notes its prejudicial skew in favor of Quakerism—apparently it has resulted in record numbers of inquiries to the Quaker magazine for sample issues.

I think if they had had "*Commonweal* Catholic" as one of the categories, the Quakers would be out of business. (And it could do wonders for *Commonweal*'s circulation.)

Nevertheless, I did go to the local Friends meeting last week—just to see what I was missing. I loved it. Maybe I'll go for joint citizenship.

TOM BAKER
Princeton, N.J.

Confessing sins

In his "Sinning and Sorrowing" (July 13), John Garvey made a case for reinvigorating the sacrament of confession by reconnecting it to an early historical meaning of baptism, which is forgiveness of sins and therefore reconciliation with Christ.

The problem with Garvey's argument is his archaic rendering of baptism as merely "forgiveness of sins." Baptism is more accurately a call to ministry that invites us to walk with Jesus through death in order to create a resurrected world where peace and justice reign. And yes, through this we experience reconciliation, but not without accepting the hard invitation into Christ's death, so that we may also rise with Christ.

Thus, confession of sins finds little basis in a holistic understanding of baptism. However, Garvey's notion of confession as a deepening of the spiritual life may appropriately be linked to the challenge of baptism.

PAUL KRENZELOK
Duluth, Minn.

Assad's assault

John Kelsay got it right in "Denouncing the Jews" (June 15). The media have unfairly focused attention on Pope John Paul II's alleged silence when unexpectedly assaulted by Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's invitation to Christians to join in a holy war against the Jews. The real import of the occasion lay elsewhere. Assad repeated one of the most durable and vicious anti-Semitic canards, namely, that the Jews are the enemies of humanity. Offering an updated version of the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, Muhammad Ziyadah, Syria's minister

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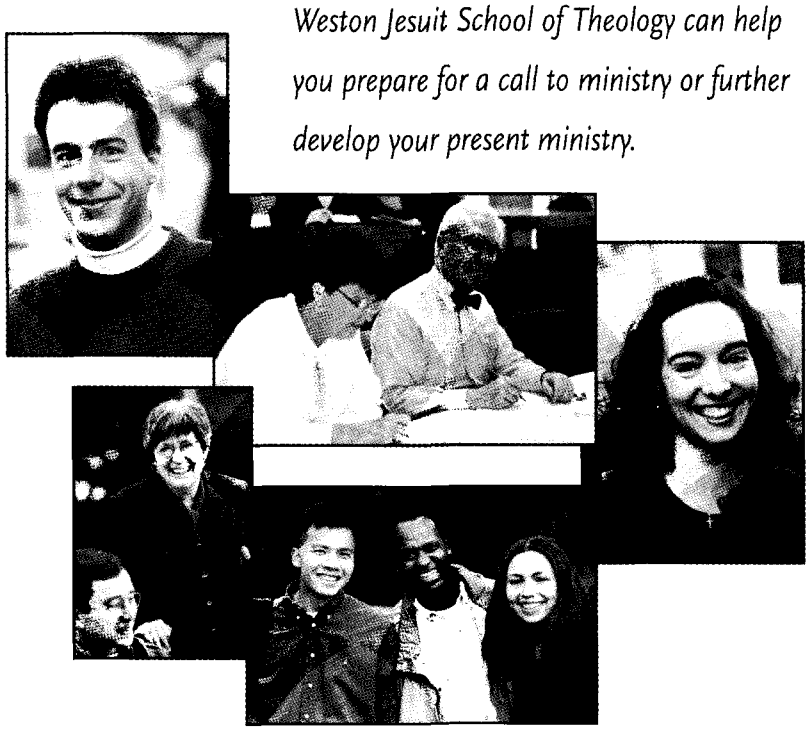

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of religion, told the pope, "We must be aware of what the enemies of God and malicious Zionism conspire to commit against Christianity and Islam." As Barry Rubin has commented, when the Arab news media express anti-Semitic statements, they are making propaganda; when Arab leaders make such statements in the highly publicized presence of the pope, they are "signaling that they really mean these things" (*Jerusalem Post*, May 6).

Such statements set the stage for conflicts in which pragmatic compromise becomes betrayal, and the total annihilation of one's adversary becomes the only acceptable long-range objective. As Kelsay correctly points out, Assad seeks to end the ability of Egypt, Jordan, and the Palestinians to make such compromises.

If Assad succeeds, Jews and Judaism will be equated with radical evil, and any Muslim who seeks peace with Israel will be tainted with that evil. Such a system is not amenable to critical scrutiny. It is, unfortunately, the basis for holy wars of extermination.

This does not mean that there can be no basis for ad hoc accommodations between the Israelis and their opponents when accommodation is perceived to be in the interest of both sides, but only if Israel keeps its powder dry.

RICHARD L. RUBENSTEIN
Bridgeport, Conn.

The writer is president emeritus, distinguished professor of religion, University of Bridgeport.

Catholic dinosaurs

According to Sidney Callahan ("The Pope Says!," June 15), the belief that "reversals, even extinctions," of doctrine have occurred is compatible with a commitment to the Catholic faith. I have to dissent from this assertion. If the church could contradict herself in her doctrinal statements, then this Catholic would find it intellectually impossible to call himself a Catholic.

Callahan mentions restrictions on religious liberty, and the dictum "Outside the church there is no salvation," as examples of what she regards as "dinosaurs" that have "vanished." On the contrary, if we look at what the contemporary magisterium has actually said, in contradistinction to what theological mythology thinks it has said, it is clear that the church has not reversed previous official teachings on either of these issues.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church (section 2109) teaches that religious freedom cannot be totally unrestricted, thus reiterating Vatican II's stipulation that this liberty exists only "within due limits" (*Dignitatis humanae*, 2). These caveats show that the church has not contradicted itself on the qualified respect owed to an erroneous conscience. By the way, Vatican II did not even withdraw the church's insistence on the ideal of a Catholic confessional state; it merely taught that such a state must acknowledge the freedom of non-Catholics (*Dignitatis humanae*, 6). As for the salvific necessity of the Catholic Church, both the council (*Lumen gentium*, 14) and the new catechism (section 846) reaf-

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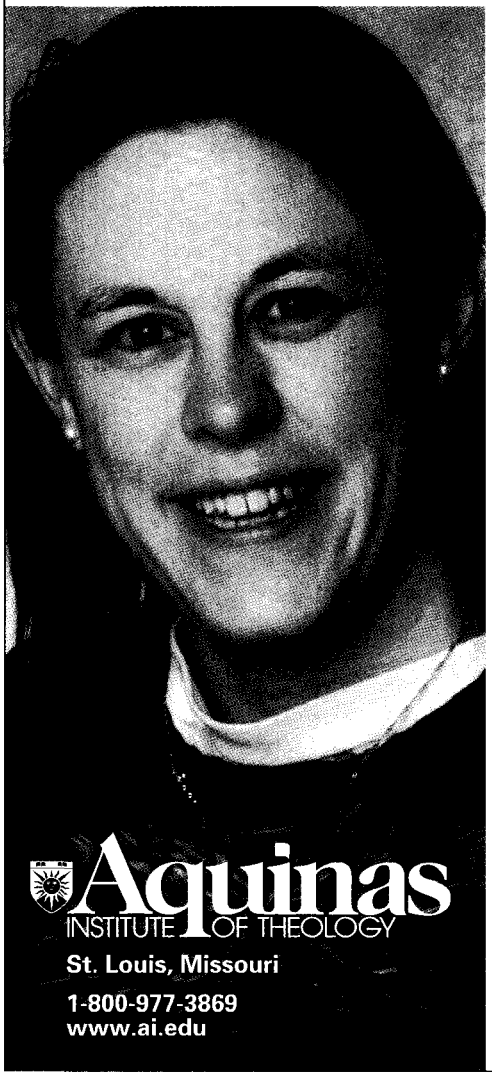

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Melanie Ahern
Master of Divinity '97

Melanie Ahern received the 1999 Campus Minister of the Year Award from the National Catholic Student Coalition.

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firm the doctrine that salvation is impossible for those who knowingly and culpably refuse to accept Catholicism, which Vatican II calls the "one true religion" (*Dignitatis humanae*, 1).

No, although the church develops her doctrines, as she did at Vatican II, she never discards them. Those dinosaurs are still happily roaming around.

STEPHEN M. O'BRIEN
Staten Island, N.Y.

Off key

I take offense at the article "The Rap on 'Rap'" (June 15). As an African American adult who grew up listening to all kinds of music, and who also enjoys musical theater immensely, I believe that Richard Alleva's article is a collection of his opinions that has very little personal experience to reinforce it.

Alleva's hesitation to call rap "numbers" songs is elitist at best and racist at worst. Perhaps he felt that most of your readership would titter at the oxymoronic nature of the term "rap artist." But let's not forget that Western music, as Alleva calls it, often stole—and sometimes still does steal—songs and beats directly from black singers and songwriters. Rap "sampling," while not necessarily original, is certainly more creative than theft. If an example is needed, why not find out who wrote the original version of the Beatles song "Money...That's What I Want"? The Beatles are a group widely revered in white culture, but largely ignored by black culture. Alleva might try to investigate that dichotomy, instead of assuming that just because most of white culture doesn't embrace hip-hop means there's something inherently wrong with the music.

While I would agree that much of hip-hop's vulgarity and objectification of women make it offensive, I find the tone and implications in Alleva's article to be even more offensive.

YOLANDA LEFEBER
Houston, Tex.

The author replies:

Yes, I shied away from calling rap numbers songs because I associate pop songs with melody, while designating recitals of any other sort (poetry recitals, for instance) as something else—"numbers" in this case. That is not a value judgment, just a distinction. If my language was not contemptuous and if I connected rap with an ancient tradition of poetry supported by music, how can my comment be "elitist at best and racist at worst"?

Ms. Lefeber tells us that Western music often "stole" songs and beats directly from black singers and songwriters, citing the Beatles as examples of this larceny. Well, was the great Charley Parker a thief when he played variations on "Laura" by the white songwriters Johnny Mercer and David Raskin? Was Miles Davis a thief when he derived his great *Porgy and Bess* LP from the Gershwin score? Whatever agonies and angers racist white America instilled in them, Parker and Davis didn't play "black" and "white." They played music.

I devote the last paragraph of my essay to an expression of hope for rap because of the way the form is now evolving. If a music is "inherently wrong," it wouldn't be able to evolve fruitfully, would it? RICHARD ALLEVA

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WHERE'S THE BEEF?

Maurice Timothy Reidy

I have a confession to make: I've lost my taste for soup kitchens.

Well, I don't have a problem with soup kitchens *per se*. But I do have a problem with the prominent role they play in the church's ministry to my generation. While I'm sure there are places where youth ministry is diverse and stimulating (I'm told that Yale has an excellent program), my experience has been that most youth programs begin and end with trips to the soup kitchen and other social-justice activities. And it's gotten to the point where we are neglecting other parts of the tradition—particularly our intellectual heritage.

Take my experience. When I was a student at Princeton in the mid-1990s, there were two options for Catholic students: join the traditional campus ministry or sign up with the local branch of Opus Dei. Like most people, I chose the former. Campus ministry consisted of daily Mass, the occasional Friday night social, and weekly trips to the soup kitchen.

In general, there was no encouragement to read magazines like *Commonweal* or *America*. No weekly Catholic roundtable, except for a periodic discussion of Catholic social teaching. No regular speakers. And that wasn't for a lack of resources. Albert Raboteau, Paul Sigmund, and the medical ethicist James Keenan, S.J., were just a few of the luminaries then on campus.

If you wanted to hear prominent Catholic speakers on a regular basis you had to attend the Jacques Maritain Society's lectures, which featured the likes of George Rutler and Henry Hyde. (I'll leave it to you to figure out who sponsored those talks.)

I don't want to pick on Princeton. I'm afraid the situation is much the same on many campuses. Like most young Catholics, I went to a secular school, so I didn't have access to the rich stock of Catholic professors available at, say, Fordham or Notre Dame. But it seems to me that, even at Catholic schools, there isn't enough effort to incorporate what goes on in the classroom into ministry programs. Theology departments dispense reading lists. Campus ministries run trips to Ecuador. But I think we do a disservice to separate the two. Book learning should be part of the messy business of faith, and should therefore have a place in campus efforts to nurture that faith.

Things aren't much better for young people who have graduated from college. Most Catholic activities for young adults involve making sandwiches. Any and all "intellectual" events seem to be sponsored by conservatives. My choices living in New York City were basically to volunteer at Covenant House or hear George Weigel at the Union League Club.

When you think about it, it's easy to see why social justice has taken over youth ministry. For one reason, it's engaging. Who can argue with feeding the hungry and clothing the needy? At a time in life when young Catholics often find themselves forced to defend their church to skeptics, it's no wonder they are drawn to a part of the tradition that has self-evident appeal.

That fact isn't lost on Catholic chaplains and youth ministers. They, understandably, want to find ways to connect with young Catholics, so they concentrate on action for social justice and hand out copies of *Dead Man Walking* and the *National Catholic Reporter*. If it packs the pews, why not give it more play?

But at what cost? Most Catholics my age have grossly neglected the church's intellectual tradition. Writers like Flannery O'Connor, Georges Bernanos, and Oscar Hijuelos are unread. Thinkers like John Tracy Ellis and John Courtney Murray are unmined. Young conservative Catholics have a pretty good handle on this heritage, but they shouldn't have all the fun.

But—as some of my friends might ask—how can we spend our days stalking card catalogues while children go hungry? Think of it this way. The church's intellectual and social-justice traditions are not separate, but part of the same cloth. Some of the church's best intellectual work has been done in the field of social justice. Conversely, a commitment to the poor is incomplete if it does not include an educational or intellectual component. As the editor of this magazine wrote recently: "In the spirit of gospel values, all Catholics should signal support for the poor, the 'other,' the marginalized, but a naïve romanticism must not lead us to suppose that the poor, the 'other,' the marginalized have needs any different from our own: to grow in wisdom and in grace, to learn, and to 'learn how to learn.'"

I don't mean to minimize the importance of social justice. I'm glad so many people find it compelling. (I do, too.) And it goes without saying that it's an indispensable part of the faith. But ours is a catholic tradition. Over the years, people have found their way in through many different doors. Sure, there were many who arrived via Dorothy Day. But there are others who were inspired by Newman or Greene or O'Connor. Why should things be any different today? The majority of young Catholics are highly educated. Maybe the best way to get through to them is to let them see the whole package. You've shown us Dan Berrigan and Helen Prejean. Now let's see the rest. □

Maurice Timothy Reidy *is a reporter for the* Hartford Courant.

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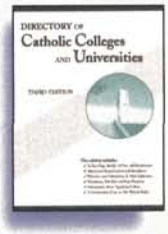

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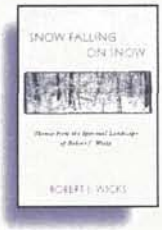

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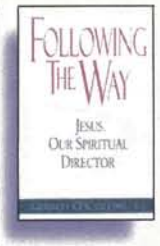

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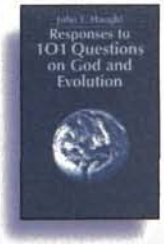

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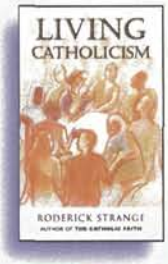

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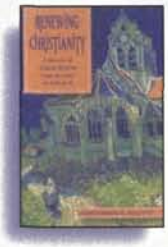

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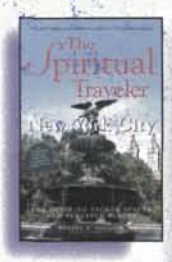

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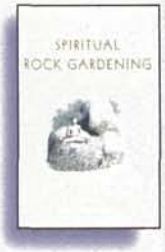

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